

W H G Kingston

## "The Missing Ship"

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### Chapter One.

**The master of the Ouzel Galley—His son and daughter—The first mate—A calm—A gale springs up—A raft seen—Owen rescues its occupant—Dan, and Pompey, the black cook—Surmises about the stranger—The gale ceases—The stranger appears on deck and gives an account of himself—Gives first news of war between England and France—Lancelot Carnegan becomes second mate of the Ouzel Galley.**

"No sign of a breeze yet, Owen?" asked Captain Tracy, as he lay in his cot, slung in the state-room of the *Ouzel Galley*, West India trader, of which stout bark he was the commander. His fair daughter Norah sat by his side fanning his pale cheek—for he, like several of his crew, had been struck down by fever, and he probably owed his life to her watchful care. For many days the vessel had lain becalmed on the glassy ocean under a tropical sun, the excessive heat tending greatly to increase the sickness on board, three of the crew, besides the second mate, having already succumbed to it. Day after day the survivors had been anxiously looking out for the wind to fill the sluggish sails hanging down against the masts; but each morning they had seen the fiery sun rise out of the calm ocean and pass across the blue vault of heaven, to sink again beneath the horizon, suffusing with a ruddy glow the whole western sky. The night brought relief from the heat, and hope revived; but when morning returned, again the suffering crew had to endure the scorching rays of the sun, from which even the shade cast by the sails afforded them but inadequate shelter. The chips from the carpenter's bench which had been thrown overboard still lay alongside; while the creaking of the yards and blocks, and the slight splashing sound as the vessel moved from side to side by the now scarcely perceptible undulations of the broad Atlantic, alone broke the silence which, reigned over the watery expanse on which she floated. Norah—a fair and beautiful girl, who, though scarcely sixteen summers had passed over her head, had already the appearance, and what was to her of the greatest consequence, the calm resolution of more mature

age—stopping for a moment in her employment, looked up with an inquiring glance from her blue eyes towards the first mate, who had just then, hat in hand, entered the cabin.

"A bank of clouds has just appeared above the horizon in the sou'-west, sir, and from the rapid way in which it is rising we shall, if I mistake not, have the wind before long, and as much as we want of it," he replied.

"Thank Heaven!" ejaculated the captain. "See all ready for shortening sail. I must try to come on deck, for we are sadly short-handed."

"Oh! don't attempt it, father," said Norah; "you have scarcely strength to stand, and Mr Massey and the crew will do all that is necessary."

"Miss Norah is right, sir—stay where you are," said the mate. "I am inclined to furl everything at once, so as to be prepared for the wind when it reaches us; it is near the hurricane season in the West Indies, and they are sometimes felt as far to the eastward as this. Should the wind not prove as strong as I expect, we can easily make sail again."

"Do as you propose, Owen," said the captain; "you are always careful and prudent."

"Ay, ay, sir," answered the mate, and he sprang quickly on deck. "All hands shorten sail!" he shouted. "Be smart, my lads, or we may have old Harry Cane aboard us before we have time to open our weather eyes."

He knew well that a joke would tend to inspirit the downcast crew, most of whom were Irishmen—the *Ouzel Galley* belonging to Dublin, though trading chiefly to the fair port of Waterford. She was a deep-waisted vessel, with three masts, the foremast and mainmast square-rigged, while the aftermast carried a long lateen-shaped sail called the mizen, with a square topsail and topgallantsail. The mainsail and foresail having been brailed up and handed, Owen ordered the crew aloft to furl the main-topsail.

"Gerald, lend me a hand to furl the mizen!" he sang out to a lad who had been actively engaged in the former operation. Gerald Tracy, the captain's son, a fine-looking youth, sprang aft to the mizen-brails. The mate having already let go the sheet, the sail was drawn up close to the yard.

"Now, aloft to the mizen-topsail," cried the mate; "we must have every stitch of canvas off her before the wind reaches us; for, depend upon it, it is in no playful mood."

The mate and Gerald sprang up the rigging, and getting hold of the bunt of the sail, quickly furled it. Pompey, the black cook, and Tim Maloney, a boy, were on deck letting go or hoisting away at the ropes as required; every other man in the ship able to move was aloft. All the after sail having been taken off the ship, Owen, as he was about to descend from the yard, cast a glance to windward.

"Here it comes, sharp and strong," he sang out; "down—down, quick, all of you!" and, seizing the backstay, he glided like lightning on deck. Gerald followed his example. As soon as the mate reached the deck, he sprang to the deserted helm and gave another look in the direction from which he expected the wind to come. Already could be discerned a long line of white foam curling up above the hitherto calm sea, over the surface of which innumerable cat's-paws were playing, now sweeping across it, now vanishing, to reappear speedily in another direction. The men were in the mean time employed, under the mate's directions, in getting the ship snug.

"Gerald, do you go and assist them," he said; "we haven't a moment to lose."

The jib only remained set. Some of the crew had begun to grumble at having so much pulling and hauling, with apparently no object.

"What's the use of furling sails in a dead calm? we shall be after having to set them again, as I hope we shall get the breeze before long," exclaimed Dan Connor.

An active seaman was Dan, though he could seldom see much further than his own nose.

"Nebber fear dat," cried Pompey, "we get de wind 'tiff and 'trong as you and I like de grog, Dan—de mate hab um wedder eye open as 'wide as de captain—see what coming—look out, man—what say to dat?"

Those standing near him turned their glances over the larboard side, towards the south-west, the vessel then lying with her head to the north-west, where they saw a long line which had now assumed the appearance of a vast foaming wave, while at the same time a loud hissing roar reached their ears. The mate

shouted for another hand to come to the helm. Dan Connor sprang aft at the mate's call; but scarcely had he grasped the spokes of the wheel, than the wind with a furious rush struck the vessel. Down she heeled, while a deluge of spray flew over her. For an instant it seemed as if she was irretrievably gone, but the jib happily standing, she drew ahead, and feeling her helm, round she spun, and, righting as suddenly as she had heeled over, away she flew before the hurricane. The young mate drew his breath.

"Gerald, go below and tell your father that we're all to rights and no damage done. We had a narrow squeak for it, though; but don't say that—it may trouble your sister," said Owen.

Gerald went into the cabin with the satisfactory intelligence. On entering he found Norah clinging to the sofa, which was placed athwart-ships, at the after end of the cabin. She looked pale and anxious; happily, the captain had escaped being thrown out of his cot when the vessel had been hove on her beam-ends.

"How goes it, Gerald?" he asked.

"All right, father," answered Gerald; "the stout ship is behaving beautifully. Thanks to Mr Massey, we were well prepared for the squall when it struck us—though it's my belief if we'd had our canvas set it would have been all over with the *Ouzel Galley*. We are now scudding along under bare poles at a rate which will soon carry us into Waterford harbour, if the wind holds as it is."

"Little chance of that, I'm afraid," observed the captain; "but, Gerald, tell the mate to have the dead-lights closed. The sea will be getting up presently, and we shall have it washing through the stern windows."

"Ay, ay, sir," answered his son, who knew that an order given must be delivered immediately, and was about to go.

"Stay, Gerald—tell him to set the fore-topsail closely reefed, and to rig preventer-braces; we must not run the risk of having the ship pooped, and there will be a great chance of that happening before long, unless we have merely caught the tail of the hurricane."

The boy hurried on deck and gave the orders he had received. He found that the mate had anticipated them. The carpenter was at that moment coming aft to close the stern-ports, while several hands were going aloft to loose the fore-topsail. The mate had seen the necessity for this, as already the furious

wind had lashed the ocean, hitherto so calm, into wildly leaping seas, which came rushing up on both sides of the vessel, with foaming crests like war-steeds charging on the foe; but onward she flew before them, now rising to the summit of a wave, now pitching down into the trough on the farther side. It needed all the strength of the crew to reef and set the sail. The carpenter, as soon as he had performed his task, went forward again to assist the rest, while the mate and Gerald took the helm. The sail was at length set, and the men came down off the yard. The mate kept an anxious eye on the canvas, doubting much whether it would stand the tremendous strain put on it—he expected every moment to see it blown away from the bolt-ropes—but it was stout and new. He had little fear of the rigging, for every inch of it he had himself assisted in turning in and setting up, and not a strand had parted—all was thoroughly served. He now summoned one of the best hands to relieve him at the helm; he then had a spare fore-topsail got up on deck ready to bend, should the first be carried away. Having made every arrangement which as a good seaman he considered necessary, he sent Gerald back into the cabin to report to the captain; he would, he knew, be anxious to learn how things were going on. Gerald, who was an enthusiastic admirer of the mate, did not fail to tell all that had been done.

“He is a good seaman, father, that mate of ours,” he exclaimed.

“I can always trust him to do the right thing,” observed the captain.

“He is as fine a fellow as ever stepped,” answered Gerald, warmly; “when I thought the ship was going over, I looked at him, and there he stood, as calm and unmoved as if we had been running before a light breeze with all sail set.”

Norah’s eye brightened as her brother spoke, and a smile played over her countenance, though she said nothing.

“You will do well to imitate him, Gerald,” remarked the captain; “he is calm and confident because he thoroughly knows his business and what will have to be done under every emergency. A better seaman never trod the deck of a merchant vessel, or a king’s ship either. When this voyage is over, as Norah insists on my not going to sea again, I intend to get the owners to give him the command of the *Ouzel Galley*—they know their own interests too well to refuse my request. Before long you will be old enough, Gerald, to become second mate, and perhaps, if the stout ship meets with no mishap, to command her one of these

days, should Owen get a larger craft, or take it into his head to come and live on shore."

Gerald was glad to hear his father speak in this style; it showed that he was already getting better and recovering his spirits, which had been much cast down, especially since the death of so many of the crew. He now inquired how the others were getting on, and sent Gerald forward to learn. He soon came back with the report that two already seemed much better, but that the third had as yet shown no signs of amendment.

"They'll pick up, poor fellows, when we get into a cooler latitude," observed the captain. "I feel myself already another man, and hope to be on deck in a day or two."

Tim, the cabin-boy, now entered to prepare the table for supper. It still wanted an hour or more to-night, but that meal in those days was taken earlier than at present. Pompey, notwithstanding the way the vessel was tumbling about, had managed to keep his fire in and to cook some broth for the captain and the sick men—for they were unable to partake of more substantial fare. Norah had become so accustomed to a sea life in all weathers, that she was able to attend to her father and to take her seat at table. Tim, as soon as he had placed the dishes, well secured with the usual puddings and fiddles, went to summon the mate, who was generally on such occasions relieved by the boatswain; but Tim came back to say that Mr Massey could not quit the deck till the gale moderated. Gerald, having despatched his supper, quickly joined him.

"What do you think of the weather, Mr Massey?" he asked.

"That it is blowing big guns and small-arms," answered the mate, laughing. "Not that that much matters as long as it holds steadily in its present quarter; but I'm on the look-out lest it should change, and if it does, it will not give warning of its intention. It would be an ugly thing to be taken aback with this sea on, and it is that we must be prepared for."

The waves had indeed, since Gerald had been below, greatly increased, and were now rising far above the bulwarks, and as they curled over threatened to come down on the deck and overwhelm the good ship.

"Keep a tight hold of a stanchion or the mizen-mast, Gerald," said the mate; "if one of those seas breaks on board, you might be carried away in a moment. See, the men know what may

possibly happen, and are doing as I advise you—though, if I had my will, you should remain below.”

“My father and Norah would be ashamed of me if I did,” answered Gerald; “depend on it, I will take good care to hold on with tooth and nail if we get so unwelcome a visitor.”

Onward flew the ship; already the gloom of night had begun to steal over the waste of waters, when the look-out forward shouted, “A lump of timber or a boat capsized right ahead a point on the starboard bow!” Immediately afterwards he added, “It’s a raft, sir, with a man on it; he’s waving to us!”

The mate sprang into the mizen rigging, and having glanced at the position of the raft, of which he caught sight as it rose to the summit of a sea, he exclaimed, “We must save the poor fellow’s life—port the helm half a point. Steady now. Get ropes ready to heave to him,” he next shouted out; and, securing one round his own waist, he leaped into the fore-chains.

The ship flew on, but he had rightly calculated the position of the raft. There was a fearful risk, however, that she might run over it, or that the force of the sea might dash it against her side and crush its occupant. But no time was allowed for considering the risk to be run. Owen saw that the man had disengaged himself from the ropes by which he had been secured to the raft, and was holding on to one of them alone. He must have well known his terrible danger, for a sea might in a moment wash him away, in spite of his holdfast. The mate stood ready with another rope in hand to heave to him. The next instant the raft was driven against the side of the vessel, and the man lost his hold. Prompted by a generous instinct, Owen, at the great risk of his own life, sprang on to the raft, and, grasping him round the waist, put the rope into his hand, while he held him fast. The crew were in readiness, in the rigging or leaning over the bulwarks, and before another moment had passed both Owen and the stranger were drawn up and stood in safety in the main-chains, whence eager hands hauled them on board.

“You have rendered me a good turn, and I hope to live long enough to repay it,” said the rescued man, as soon as he had sufficiently recovered his breath to speak; for he had been pretty nearly exhausted by the efforts he had made to hold on to the raft, and the sudden jerk he had received in being hauled on board.

He was evidently a seaman, for a seaman and a strong and determined man alone could have exerted himself as he had done to preserve his life. By his dress and manner, also, he appeared to be an officer. The physical suffering and mental anxiety he must have gone through had naturally so much exhausted him that, though able to stand, he was compelled to hold fast to the bulwarks to support himself. From his appearance, however, he looked like a man capable of enduring as much as most persons; he was strongly built, rather above the middle height, with a countenance which if not handsome was good-looking, and betokened courage and resolution.

"I am glad that I was fortunate enough to get hold of you, and to help you on board—though, as I should have tried to do the same for any human being placed in the situation in which you were, I do not feel that you have any special reason to be thankful to me," answered Owen.

"As to that matter, all I know is, that if you hadn't jumped on the raft at the moment you did and thrown me a rope, I should have been washed away, and have been by this time where many a bold fellow has gone before; and though a more exalted fate may be in store for me, according to the old saying, as I have no wish to leave the world just yet, I am bound to be grateful to you, captain—for I conclude that you are the skipper of this craft," said the stranger.

"No, I am but the mate," answered Owen; "the skipper is ill, and as the berths in the state cabin are occupied, I can only offer you mine—and I would advise you to get off your wet clothes and turn in between the blankets, with a stiff glass of grog, or you may be the worse for your wetting and exposure."

"I have knocked about too much up and down at sea, with all sorts of adventures, to be much the worse for what I've gone through. However, I will accept your offer. A stiff glass of grog, especially, will be welcome, and something to eat with it; for I had no opportunity of dining on the raft, as you may suppose," answered the stranger.

He said this in an off-hand, careless manner, laughing as he spoke; but notwithstanding his boasts, he was glad of the assistance of Owen and Dan Connor, on whose shoulders he rested while they conducted him to the cabin of the former. No sooner did he reach it than he sank down utterly exhausted, and it was not without considerable help from Dan that he was able to get off his garments and turn in to bed.



"You'll be all to rights now, your honour, and I'll be after bringing you a basin of soup and a glass of grog," remarked Dan, as he was gathering up the wet clothes to carry to the galley fire.

"Stay, there are some papers in my pockets which I wish to keep in my own possession," said the stranger, as he saw what Dan was about.

"They're like to be in a pretty mess, which it will take a pair of sharp eyes to read, by this time," observed Dan.

"They are in a tin case—hand it to me," was the answer, as Dan began to feel about in the pockets of the stranger's jacket. "You may take the clothes away now, my man; and don't be long in bringing me the grog, mind you," added the stranger, when he had possessed himself of the tin case and, in addition, a well-filled purse and several other smaller articles, which his pockets had contained.

"By-the-by, what's the name of this vessel, and to what port is she bound?" he asked.

"Shure, she's the *Ouzel Galley*, your honour," answered Dan, "and as sweet a craft as sails between the West Indies and Dublin city—though we're bound just now to Waterford, and we'll be after getting there, I hope, some day."

"And what's the name of your skipper and your mate, who pulled me out of the water?" continued the stranger.

"It's Captain Tracy you mane, and the mate's Mr Owen Massey, as fine a man as iver stepped a deck. I'm after belaving, if he wasn't, he wouldn't have done what he did just now, as your honour will be willing to own," answered Dan.

"You're right—it was a brave deed," said the stranger. As soon as Dan, bundling up the clothes, had left the cabin, its occupant eagerly opened the tin case and examined its contents, apparently to satisfy himself that they had escaped damage; then closing it, he placed it under his pillow, on which he sank down exhausted.

"Faith, I've had a narrow escape—but as this craft is bound to fair Waterford, I must either quit her before she gets there, or take care that none of my friends recognise me when I step on shore," he murmured to himself. "However, my good genius may enable me to escape that danger, as it has to scramble

through many others. Strange that my life should have been saved by Owen Massey—he does not know me, however; but that is not surprising, as I am greatly changed since we were together. Few traces remain about me of the slight youth I then was. I must be on my guard not to betray myself to him, or he and his commander may take it into their heads that their loyalty obliges them to deliver me over to the Government. As long as they don't find out who I am, I shall have no difficulty in making my escape, even though I am compelled to set foot on shore in Waterford itself. I wish those fellows would bear a hand and bring me some food—that and a night's rest will restore my strength and enable me to consider what to do better than I now can. I have run many a narrow chance of losing my life, but never was I nearer to death than to-day—another hour or two on the raft would have finished me, and then where should I have been? Bah! I must not allow such thoughts to trouble me, or I shall become nerveless as a young girl."

In spite of all his efforts the thoughts he dreaded would intrude on the stranger's mind. He looked eagerly for the return of the seaman with the promised food and grog. Dan, in the mean time, with the bundle of wet clothes under his arm, had made his way forward to the caboose, where Pompey was busy blowing away at his fire and trying to get his kettle and a saucepan of broth to boil.

"Well, Dan, my jewel, who dis fellow just come on board? What you tink about him?" asked Pompey.

"Faith, it's more than he thought fit to tell me," answered Dan. "All I know is that he's a mighty fine-spoken gentleman, with a big purse of gold in his pocket."

"In which pocket?" asked Pompey eagerly, taking up the jacket.

"You big thief, you don't think I am after laving it to your itching fingers—no, no, Pompey, even if the gentleman himself hadn't taken it out, he's been too long at sea not to guess pretty shrewdly that the shiners would vanish if the purse found its way forrard," said Dan.

"You'll not be after calling me a big thief, Dan?" exclaimed Pompey, getting angry at this insinuation against his honesty.

"No, but I'll back your tongue to wag faster than any man's in this ship," replied Dan. "Come, bear a hand and get the water to boil, and then we'll hang up these clothes to dry, for the stranger doesn't look like a man who'll be content to lie in bed

longer than he can help, and he'll be wanting to get up tomorrow morning and show himself on deck."

"He may be a mighty fine gentleman," muttered Pompey, "but I never did see much good come in hauling a man, whoever he was, out of de water."

"What's that you say, you old thief of the world?" exclaimed Dan. "Whether good or bad comes of it, it was as brave a thing as you or I or any man ever saw done, to leap on the raft as our mate did and manage to bring the stranger on board. We've some stout fellows among us, but not one would have dared to do that same. When the skipper hears of it he'll be after praising him as he deserves; and there's some one else, too, who'll not think the less of him than she does now. It won't be my fault if I don't let the skipper know how it all happened—though maybe the stranger won't forget to tell him—but as for the mate himself, he's as likely as not to make light of it, and just to say that it's what any other man would have done as well."

The opinion uttered by Dan was shared generally among the crew, with whom Owen Massey stood deservedly high.

"Come, bear a hand, Pompey," continued Dan; "the watch will be out before you get that fire to burn."

By dint of hard puffing Pompey succeeded in his object, and Dan went aft with a kettle of hot water in one hand and a basin of soup in the other. He then, having obtained the requisite amount of rum, repaired to the mate's cabin, where he found the stranger on the point of dropping off from exhaustion, and almost in a state of insensibility. The broth and grog, however, quickly revived him. He uttered but few words of thanks, and again falling back on his pillow, dropped off to sleep.

Gerald, who had witnessed Owen's gallant act, trembling lest he should fail and lose his life, gave a shout of joy when he saw him successful and safe again on board. Prompted by his feelings, he sprang towards the mate, and grasping his hand, exclaimed, "Bravely done, Mr Massey! Oh, how thankful I am that you got him on board! It did not seem possible. Had you been lost, it would have broken Norah's heart, and my poor father's too—for, sick as he is, he couldn't have borne it. I must go and tell them how it all happened—they'll think more of you than ever—but I'm very glad Norah wasn't on deck, for she would have felt as I did, and been terribly alarmed."

"Hush, Gerald, hush! you think more of the affair than it deserves," said Owen; "had I run any risk of losing my life, your father might have blamed me, as the safety of the ship while he is ill is committed to my charge; but remember that I took the precaution of having a rope round my waist, so that I couldn't come to any harm, and what I did any man with strength and nerve could have done likewise—so, Gerald, don't make a fuss about the matter. I saved the man's life, there's no doubt about that, and he, therefore, is the only person who need thank me."

Notwithstanding what the mate had said, Gerald hurried into the cabin and gave a report of what had occurred, not failing to express his own opinion of the gallantry of the act. Norah, who had listened with breathless interest while he spoke, uttered an ejaculation of thankfulness, forgetting to make any inquiry about the man who had been saved. Captain Tracy, however, expressed himself much as Owen expected he would.

"It was a rash though brave deed," he observed, "but I'll not blame him—he had no time, evidently, to think of the risk he was running, but acted as his gallantry prompted him. He did not get any hurt, I hope?"

"No, father, beyond a thorough wetting—it was all done in a moment—he was on board again almost before I could have looked round, walking the deck as if nothing had happened," answered Gerald.

"I am thankful for that," said the captain; "and where have they stowed the man he saved? Poor fellow! it would have been hard lines with him, in such a sea as is still running, if he had not been picked up."

"The mate put him into his own cabin," said Gerald; "the cook has been heating some soup for him, as he seemed very weak and pretty nigh exhausted."

"Owen might have let him go forward with the men; they would have looked after him carefully enough," observed Captain Tracy. "There was no necessity for Owen to give up his own cabin—but he is always generous and ready to sacrifice his own comforts for others."

"But the stranger from his way of speaking and dress seems to be an officer, and he would think himself badly treated if he had been sent forward," said Gerald.

"I must hear more about him from Owen," said the captain; "ask him to come here as soon as he can leave the deck and has got on dry clothes. How's the weather now, Gerald?"

"It is moderating rapidly, father, and the mate thinks we shall have smooth water and a light breeze before night," was the answer.

When Gerald returned on deck he found the mate giving orders to loose the topsails. As soon as this was done, the wind still decreasing, the foresail and mainsail were set, and before long the ship was bounding proudly over the seas with as much canvas as could be carried. At length, leaving the deck in charge of the boatswain, Owen repaired to the cabin and answered many questions put to him by the captain. He might well have been satisfied with the approbation he received from Norah, if not from her lips, from those bright blue eyes of hers—even the captain forgot to scold him as he had intended for his rashness.

"We shall hear more about the man to-morrow, when he has recovered," he observed; "he'll need a long rest, for he must have pretty well given up all hope of his life when you saved him, till the ship hove in sight—and even then he could scarcely expect to be picked up with the sea there was running at the time. Well, I trust that he'll be grateful."

The captain then made inquiries about the sick men, of whom Owen was able to give a favourable report.

"Thank God for that!" said the captain. "I feel myself quite another man to what I have been for many a day, and I hope to-morrow to be on deck again. If this stranger proves to be a seaman he may give you some relief by doing duty on board; you've had a trying time of it, Owen, and it is a mercy you've not knocked up."

Owen now bade the captain and mistress Norah good night, and went on deck, when he desired the boatswain—the only person besides himself to whom the charge of the ship could be confided—to turn in, that he might relieve him in the next watch, should the weather continue to improve as he hoped it would do. He was not disappointed; when the morning broke, the ship was running on before a fair and moderate breeze. The rest of the usual canvas was set, and under all sail the *Ouzel Galley* made good way towards her destination. With a thankful heart, soon after breakfast, Norah accompanied her father on deck. The other sick men were able to crawl up and enjoy the

fresh air, their pallid faces showing, however, how near death's door they had been. It was evident that some time must elapse before they would be fit for duty. The stranger had not yet made his appearance; but Dan, who had dried his clothes, had taken them into the cabin, and reported that he was at length awake and expressed his intention of getting up. Norah was seated with her father under an awning stretched over the poop-deck, where both shade and air could be enjoyed. When the stranger came up the companion-hatch, the first person he saw was Owen. He put out his hand.

"Though I got but a glimpse of you last night, you are, I am sure, the man who hauled me off the raft, and I will again thank you heartily for saving my life," he said, in a frank tone. "I find that I have deprived you of your cabin; you must stow me elsewhere for the rest of the voyage, for I must not continue to incommode you."

"There is another berth I can take, so don't talk about that," answered Owen.

"As you wish," said the stranger, who having, to his own satisfaction it may be, expressed his thanks, took a seaman-like glance round the ship. As he did so, his eye fell on Norah and the captain. An expression of surprise crossed his countenance, succeeded by a look of admiration, as he beheld Norah, who appeared even more beautiful and attractive than usual, her colour heightened by the fresh breeze and her heart joyous with the thoughts of her father's recovery. She withdrew her gaze, which had naturally been turned towards the stranger who had thus unexpectedly appeared. He at once, guessing who the captain and his daughter were, stepped on to the poop and advanced towards them. Doffing his sea-cap with the manners of a man accustomed to the world, he bowed to the young lady, and then addressed the captain. "I have come without any formal invitation on board your ship, sir, but faith, I hadn't my choice—your mate hauled me on board without asking whether I wished it or no; and, to confess the truth, I am very much obliged to him, for had he stopped to inquire I should not have had the opportunity of answering, as in another moment I should have been carried to lie where many a brave fellow sleeps, at the bottom of the sea. I am therefore indebted to him for saving my life—what he did, he did well and gallantly, at no slight risk of losing his own."

"I am thankful that he succeeded," answered Captain Tracy; "and, for my part, all I can say is that you are very welcome on

board—and glad I am to see you so much recovered this morning.”

“A night’s rest has worked wonders—yesterday evening I felt very much unlike myself, but I am now strong and well as usual.” The stranger took two or three turns on deck to verify his assertion; again stopping, in an off-hand style he inquired how long the ship had been out, what weather had been met with, and where she was bound for—though, curiously enough, he did not offer to give any account of himself, apparently intending to let the captain put any questions to him on the subject he might think fit. Norah, not being destitute of the curiosity natural to her sex, was longing to learn who the stranger was—yet she did not like to ask him herself. She waited, hoping that her father would do so. She could at length restrain herself no longer.

“Had you been long in the water, sir?” she inquired.

“Five or six hours, I believe, more or less,” he answered, smiling. “By-the-by, I must apologise for not having before given an account of myself. To the best of my belief, I am the only survivor of the gallant fellows who manned the *Dragon* privateer, of which I had the honour to be first officer. She carried sixteen guns and a crew of 110 hands, all told.”

“A privateer!” exclaimed Captain Tracy. “What flag did you sail under? Has England again gone to war? We had heard nothing of it before we left Port Royal.”

“Oh, that is not surprising—it is scarcely six weeks since England declared war against France,” replied the stranger. “We knew what was in the wind, and sailed from Bristol, to which port the *Dragon* belonged, immediately the news reached us, in search of French homeward-bound ships, hoping to get hold of them before they had heard of the breaking out of war. We had, as you may judge, a quick run to the southward, having on our way made three captures, and by having to send prize crews away in them our strength was considerably diminished. Still our captain, Simon Avery—you may have heard of him, sir—was not the man to give up while there was a chance of falling in with other vessels. Short-handed as we were, we had to keep watch and watch; and yesterday morning, while the watch below were asleep, and most of the hands on deck much in the same state, the ship was struck by a squall, and before sheet or brace could be let go, over she went and began to fill. I had just time, with three others, to get hold of a half-hatch, to cut some spars adrift, and to shove off to a distance, when down she

went, carrying with her every soul on board. I don't wish to harrow the young lady's feelings by describing the scene. A few floated up and shouted out for help, but we couldn't give it, for our own raft was already loaded. Before many minutes were over, even the stoutest swimmers had sunk beneath the surface. I had got hold of an axe and a coil of rope, and we managed to lash the spars to a grating. While so employed, one of the men slipped off; as he couldn't swim, he was drowned, and thus we had more room. The sea rapidly got up, and now another of my companions was washed away, and then the last. I secured myself to the raft, resolved to struggle for life while I had strength; but had not, fortunately, your ship stood towards me, and your brave mate gallantly hauled me on board, I should to a certainty have been lost."

"I am very thankful, sir, that my mate was the means of saving you," said Captain Tracy; "you cannot praise him too highly. He has sailed with me since he first came to sea, and though he took to the life somewhat later than most people do, he has become a better seaman than many of his elders."

"I don't doubt it, sir; I should judge from his looks that he is all you describe him to be," answered the stranger.

"You say," resumed Captain Tracy, "that the English and French are at loggerheads again—can you tell me whether any king's ships have been sent out for the protection of our commerce, or, what is of more consequence to us, whether many French privateers are already afloat?"

"As to that, it was reported that a fleet was fitting out at Portsmouth with all despatch to be placed under the command of Sir Edward Hawke; and it was said that Admiral Byng was to be sent to the Mediterranean with a squadron. Another fleet was already at sea, under the command of Admiral Holburne; and the news has arrived that he came up with and attacked the French fleet, commanded by Admiral Macnamara, off the American coast, and captured two 64-gun ships, with a considerable number of troops on board. It is evident, therefore, that the English are no longer asleep, as they have been for some time past, and are intending to carry on the war with vigour. With regard to the Frenchmen, they are pretty wide awake, though they may not have expected to be attacked so suddenly; and as far as I was able to learn, they have not been slow in sending both men-of-war and privateers to sea—and I would advise you to stand clear of any strange sail we may fall in with: it is wiser to avoid a friend than to run the risk of being caught by a foe."



"This is bad news indeed you give me, sir," said Captain Tracy, "though I have to thank you for it, as it is better to be forewarned; and you may depend on it, I will follow your advice. Had I thought it likely that war would break out, I should not have brought my young daughter to sea; but she was anxious to come as she had no one to look after her, and I intended this to be my last voyage, for I have knocked about enough on the ocean to long to settle down quietly on shore. We know that we must run all risks, but I cannot bear the thought of what might happen should we be captured by a picarooning privateer, for most of them are but little better than pirates." He said this in a low voice, aside, to the stranger, intending that Norah should not hear him.

"I sincerely hope that we shall not fall in with a Frenchman of any quality, either a man-of-war or one of the picarooning rascals you speak of," answered the stranger, in a somewhat sarcastic tone.

"Well, Mr—I beg your pardon, you haven't mentioned your name—I have again to thank you for the information and advice you have given me, and I hope you'll find yourself at home on board this ship. We're pretty well provisioned, and we'll not starve you, at all events," said Captain Tracy.

"Thank you, captain, I have no fear about the matter," answered the stranger; "and as to my name, I quite forgot to give it. Indeed, you are not likely to have heard of me before, for I have been knocking about in distant seas for most of my life—it is Lancelot Carnegan. I hail from Ireland, as you may suppose; and perhaps you may have already discovered a touch of the brogue—but it has been well-nigh washed out of me; still, though we children of Erin roam the world over, we never entirely get rid of our mother tongue."

"Bad luck to us if we do," answered the captain, laughing. "I might have guessed that you came from the old country—and now you'll have an opportunity, if you wish to remain when we reach harbour, of renewing your acquaintance with it and any friends you may have."

"There are few, if any, who know me," answered Mr Carnegan. "I played truant at an early age, and have seldom since then set foot on my native shore."

Norah had made no attempt to join in the conversation. The new-comer, now turning towards her, addressed her in a deferential tone, and with a look which clearly showed the

admiration he felt. He inquired how she liked the West Indies, and what parts of the islands she had seen, and whether she enjoyed being at sea. They were but commonplace questions, but his manner encouraged her to speak freely, and she described with much graphic power the scenery and places she had visited.

"I delight in the sea," she added. "I enjoy it in all weathers; and even when a storm has been raging I have felt no fear, for I knew that the good ship is sound, and that those in command were well able to manage her. I should have been ready to accompany my father in as many more voyages as he might wish to make, and it is not I who have persuaded him to quit the sea. I fear, indeed, that he will soon get tired of the quiet life he will lead on shore."

A complimentary remark was rising to Mr Carnegan's lips, but he restrained himself, not quite certain how it might be taken, and merely said, "Captain Tracy will have no cause, I am sure, to regret his choice. Though I love the sea, I confess that I often long to take up my abode in some romantic spot in the old country, with the companionship of one whose happiness I could watch over. In truth, I could gladly spend the remainder of my days far away from war and strife, and out of sight even of the stormy ocean—for, should I catch a glimpse of that, I might at times be tempted to wish myself again bounding over the buoyant wave."

The speaker perhaps expected to see Norah cast down her eyes as he addressed her; but she looked up with a steady glance, and laughingly answered, "If you think that, you have very little confidence in your own resolution."

Mr Carnegan was about to reply, when the captain observed, "Let me advise you, sir, to keep to the sea, unless you have some better calling in view. An idle life on shore won't suit you, a young man of spirit; and those who try it have to repent of their folly. But you will excuse me when I say that I think you would find as honourable employment in the merchant service as on board a privateer—not but that I am ready to allow that many gallant fellows engage in that sort of work; though, when you look at it in its true light, privateering is but licenced robbery at the best."

"I cannot say that I so view it," observed Mr Carnegan; "while benefiting ourselves and lining our own pockets, we are serving the country. We capture our foes in fair and open fight, while we run the risk of being taken ourselves. However, to prove to

you that I don't despise the merchant service, as you appear to be rather short-handed, I shall be happy to do duty on board as one of your mates, if you will trust me. I don't ask for wages, but it will be a satisfaction to me to feel that I am working my passage home."

"I don't doubt your knowledge of seamanship and navigation, and gladly accept your offer," answered the captain.

Mr Carnegan was accordingly duly installed in the office of second mate of the *Ouzel Galley*.

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## Chapter Two.

**Further discussions about the stranger—Mr Carnegan shows his admiration of Norah—Approaching Ireland—A confession—A sail in sight—Chased—The enemy gains on the Ouzel Galley—Norah and Gerald sent into the hold—The fight begins—The Ouzel Galley holds out bravely, but is rapidly overtaken—Both mates wounded—The Frenchmen board the Ouzel Galley—Gerald defends Norah—The French captain's courtesy—The Ouzel Galley in the hands of the Frenchmen—The Coquille goes off in chase—A sleep-loving lieutenant—An idea occurs to Gerald.**

The wind continued fair and the weather fine, and the *Ouzel Galley* made good progress on her voyage. Norah was not free from anxiety with regard to her father, who had sufficiently recovered his strength to come on deck and carry on duty, but she longed to get him safe on shore, where alone she believed he would be restored to his usual health. The new mate showed himself to be a good seaman, and was evidently accustomed to command, as far as the captain could judge by the way in which he trimmed sails and issued his orders to the crew. They obeyed him as seamen always do an officer whom they look upon as a good sailor—not that they were particularly disposed to like him, for he never spoke to any of them except to tell them what to do, and his tone was always that of a person who intended to have his orders carried out. Had he come on board in the ordinary way, they would have taken this as a matter of course; but Pompey had expressed his opinion that there was some mystery about him—he might be a true man, but it was possible that he might be of the character of the well-known

Flying Dutchman, and had appeared only for the sake of betraying them. The rest of the crew were well disposed to take up this opinion; indeed, few believed that a mortal man could have survived on the raft in the heavy sea there was running at the time; and Mr Carneghan was more narrowly watched than he suspected.

"I tell you what, mates," observed Pompey one evening, when he and two or three of his especial chums were seated together in the forecabin, "you may be sartain sure no good will come of having this stranger aboard. Why de captain make him mate is more than I can tell. De oder night, as he walked the deck shouting out to de hand on de fore-topsail yard-arm, I see a flame of fire come of his mouth, and den I says to myself, 'I know who you are.' I tell you only what true, as I am living man."

"Shure, he was only knocking the ashes out of his pipe," remarked Dan Connor; "it's one he brought on board with him, and I've seen him smoke it many a time."

"He may have a pipe, but dat was no pipe he was smoking den," answered the black.

"I ain't quite sure but as how Pompey isn't right," remarked Tom Stokes, an English seaman. "I've heard say that the Flying Dutchman he was speaking of plays all sorts of tricks to get aboard; sometimes he comes alongside in a boat with a bundle of letters, and woe betide the crew who take them on board! Their ship's doomed, and will be sure to blow up, or be burnt, or go to the bottom, or run on a sunken reef. To my mind, half the ships that are cast away are lost by some such trick as that. Maybe he thinks he's been found out, and is now trying a new dodge; if I had my will, we'd lay him by the heels some dark night and heave him overboard—it's the only chance there is of saving the ship."

Meantime the subject of these remarks would have been very indifferent to them had he heard what was said. He was doing his best to ingratiate himself with the captain and his fair daughter. Whenever Norah was on deck he was sure to be there also, and was always ready to assist her when the sea was running somewhat high and the ship was tumbling about more than usual. She appeared to receive these attentions as a matter of course, and always thanked him courteously. She could not, however, fail to remark that, where-ever he was standing, his eye was directed towards her; and especially, if her father and Owen were below, that he invariably drew near

to enter into conversation. It is possible that she may have suspected the admiration she had excited, but she certainly never, by word, or look, or manner, did anything to encourage him. He also was on his guard not to say anything which might annoy or alarm her, while his manner was always deferential. He continued on friendly terms with Owen, and always spoke good-naturedly to Gerald, taking evident pleasure in describing the countries he had visited and the strange scenes he had witnessed, to which the boy always eagerly listened. Although the ship was short-handed, as it was of the greatest importance to get home as soon as possible, all sail which could be prudently set was carried night and day. At that period it was the custom on board merchant vessels to shorten sail at night, so that should the ship be caught by a squall she might the better be prepared for it; but as the two mates now took watch and watch during the hours of darkness, they allowed all the sails to remain standing which had been carried during the day. A bright look-out was kept from the mast-head from sunrise to sunset, and occasionally when a strange sail was seen, as soon as it was ascertained in what direction she was steering, the course was changed to avoid her. As each day brought the *Ouzel Galley* nearer to the shores of Ireland, the captain's spirits rose, as did his hopes of getting in safe. The second mate seemed quite as anxious on the subject as any one else on board; but Pompey was not yet satisfied.

"We're not in yet," he whispered to Dan Connor. "Why he not send de ship to de bottom before dis I not know; but you see—he play some scurvy trick before he done wid us."

Fortunately for the second mate, the rest of the crew were not so deeply imbued with Pompey's opinions as to induce them to act according to his advice; but they still regarded Mr Carneghan with suspicion, though they obeyed his commands with as much alacrity as at first. Several other strange sail were seen in the distance, and as before carefully avoided. The ship had got to about the latitude of Lisbon.

"How soon may we expect to get into port?" asked Norah of her father.

"If the wind holds fair, another week will carry us safe up to the quay of Waterford," answered the captain; "but we may meet with a head wind, and it may be a fortnight or three weeks before we make the land—but we'll hope for the best, and it will not be for lack of doing all that seamen can do if we don't succeed."

The sea was smooth, the wind being from the southward, while a light mist prevented the sun's rays being over oppressive. Norah as usual went on deck after breakfast with her work and a book. Owen was below; it was the second mate's watch, and soon after she had taken her seat he approached her.

"In a few days, Miss Tracy, we shall be doomed to part," he said, "It may be that, compelled by a cruel fate to wander over the world, I may never again meet you; but, believe me, the time I have spent on board this ship I shall ever look upon as the happiest of my life."

"You are very good to say so," answered Norah, "though I should have supposed, from the account you have given of yourself, that you would have met with many other opportunities of enjoying life far more than you could have done on board the *Ouzel Galley*."

"It is not the place, Miss Tracy, but the person with whom one is associated, on which one's happiness depends. I speak from the depths of my heart—if I could hope to enjoy existence with you, I would not exchange my lot for that of the proudest monarch on earth," said Mr Carnegian.

Before Norah could reply, the look-out from the mast-head shouted, "A sail on the larboard bow!" At that instant, as he spoke, the captain came on deck, followed by Owen.

"What course is she steering?" asked the former.

"About south-east, sir, close-hauled," was the answer.

While the captain was speaking Owen had gone forward, and was now making his way up the fore-rigging. He quickly reached the mast-head; he had not been there many seconds before the breeze freshening blew away the mist, disclosing to view a large ship under all sail, her hull already rising above the horizon. Unslinging his glass, he directed it towards her.

"What does she look like?" asked the captain.

"She is flush-decked, and I make out ten ports on a side, sir," answered Owen from aloft. Saying this, he quickly came down on deck, from whence the movements of the stranger, which was standing directly across the course the *Ouzel Galley* was steering, could be discerned as well as from the mast-head.

"If we hold on as we are now we shall be within range of her guns in less than an hour, and I much fear that she is an enemy, sir," said Owen, as he came up to the captain.

"We'll do our best, then, to keep out of her way," was the answer. "Port the helm—man the larboard braces—ease off the starboard braces and bowlines! We'll stand away to the sou'-west till we run her out of sight; it will cause us some delay, but it will be better than running the risk of capture."

The two mates and Gerald, with all hands, went to the ropes, while the captain taking the helm, the ship was brought on a wind, the mizen, which had hitherto been furled, being also set, and the *Ouzel Galley* stood away on a bowline under all sail to the south-east.

"She has the look of a fast craft, and is probably strong-handed," observed the second mate.

"We shall soon see which has, notwithstanding, the faster pair of heels—the *Ouzel Galley* is no sluggard, Mr Carnegan, and we may still hope to run the stranger out of sight. Let her go along, my lad," said the captain to the man at the helm; "she sails best two points off the wind; we'll run on till dark, Owen, and if by that time the stranger isn't to be seen, we'll tack, and may chance to give her the go-by."

"I trust we may, sir," said Owen, in a tone of some doubt; "we have the advantage of being well to windward, though, as Mr Carnegan was observing, if she has a strong crew she can tack in half the time we can, and we couldn't do better than to stand on till nightfall, as you propose, and then try to give her the slip."

The eyes of all on board were naturally turned towards the stranger. As yet, however, it was difficult to say whether or not she was gaining on them. Norah saw that her father and his mates were anxious on the subject, but, being sure that they were acting for the best, restrained her own feelings—yet, as may be supposed, she could not help reflecting what might be her and her father's fate should the stranger prove to be an enemy and capture them. She had often heard of the cruelties to which the prisoners of privateers were exposed, and she was well aware of her father's hatred to the system, although privateering was generally allowed to be honourable and lawful. The stranger, though an enemy, might be a king's ship; and, if so, she might hope to receive courteous treatment from the French officers. Though she had resolved not to ask questions,

she listened to her father's and Owen's opinions as to the character of the stranger. At noon, which soon arrived, the captain and his mates came on the poop to take an observation in order to ascertain the ship's position. They had before this run some way to the northward of the latitude of Lisbon.

"Sure, it's enough to provoke a saint," exclaimed Gerald, who was accustomed to express himself somewhat vehemently; "if it hadn't been for that fellow out there we should have been half across the Bay of Biscay by this time or to-morrow. I only hope, if he comes up with us, that we'll be after giving him a good drubbing; it will serve him right if we send him to the bottom."

"What, do you think our father intends to fight the strange ship, should she prove to be an enemy?" asked Norah, with some natural trepidation in her voice.

"I'm sure we're not going to be taken, and lose the ship and our cargo, and be made prisoners and ruined without having a fight for it," answered Gerald, "especially as Owen says that he feels pretty sure she is a privateer. Why he thinks so, I can't quite make out, except that her masts rake more than those of most men-of-war and her sails are cut somewhat differently—it is impossible to be certain."

"Grant Heaven that, if there is a fight, our father and you and Owen may be preserved!" murmured Norah.

"They wouldn't fight without a good hope of success—but we must run our chance," said Gerald, laughing; "but, you know, we shall stow you down in the hold among the cargo safe enough."

"Oh no, no! I hope if there is a fight that I may be allowed to remain on deck, or at least in the cabin, where I may be ready to help any who are hurt," exclaimed Norah.

"That would never do," answered Gerald; "you might be hit as well as anybody else, and you wouldn't like to have a leg or an arm shot off."

Poor Norah shuddered at the thoughtless remark of her brother. Gerald observed the expression of her countenance.

"I didn't intend to frighten you," he said; "I hope that none of us will be hurt—only of course there's a risk, and we must save you from being exposed to it. We shall only make a running fight of it, and try to knock away some of the enemy's spars



and prevent her from following us. If she were to come up with us, she is so much bigger than we are, and so much more heavily armed, with probably six times as many hands, that we should have no chance in a broadside fight."

"If we are captured what will happen?" asked Norah.

"I suppose we shall be carried into a French port, and be kept prisoners till the war is over, and you and I must learn to talk French. It won't be so very bad, after all, so you needn't look so grave, Norah," answered Gerald.

"It will break our poor father's heart, I fear," answered Norah, "and Owen will be miserable."

"Well, then, though wishing it won't exactly help us, we'll hope to escape, and that none of the dreadful things you expect will happen," said Gerald.

Though Gerald made light of the matter, others on board did not do so. From the first Owen had had little doubt that the ship chasing them was French. The captain differed from him, but agreed that she was probably a privateer. Though her masts raked, so did those of many British ships, especially of those sailing from Jersey and Guernsey, while there was nothing that he could see remarkable about the cut of her sails. The second mate expressed no opinion. After a time, however, a cloud was seen to gather on his brow.

"I thought you boasted of this craft being remarkably fast," he observed to Owen. "Now, as far as I can judge, that ship yonder is sailing nearly two feet to our one, and will be within hail of us before dark."

"She sails faster than we do, I acknowledge; but you over-estimate her speed," answered Owen. "I still expect that we shall keep well ahead of her till dark, and we may then alter our course and escape."

"I tell you your hopes are vain; yonder ship is as fast a craft as any out of a French port—we haven't a chance of escaping her," replied Mr Carnegan.

"You know her, then?" answered Owen.

"I have seen her more than once—before the war broke out, of course—and, from her size and the weight of her metal, if we

attempt to fight her we shall be sent to the bottom," was the answer.

"The captain intends to try and knock her spars away, and thus to enable us to escape," said Owen.

"She is more likely to send our masts over the side than to suffer any harm our popguns can do her," observed the second mate.

Captain Tracy, who had been watching the stranger for some time, now summoned them both and asked their opinion. They repeated what they had before said. "Owen, we can trust our crew?" he observed.

"Even the sick men would be ready to fight—we can depend on all of them," said Owen.

"Then we'll train two guns aft, and fight them as long as our own masts stand," exclaimed Captain Tracy. "Hoist our ensign, that there may be no mistake—though I own that I have now little doubt of that fellow being a Frenchman. We shall soon see—yes—there, up goes the white flag with the lilies of France; it won't be long before she is within range."

"I think not, sir," observed the second mate, "and if you take my advice you will not attempt to fight—even if we do knock away a spar or two, with her crew of not less than a hundred and twenty men, I'll warrant she'll speedily repair her damages; and as she carries heavy metal, if I mistake not, her first broadside will send us to the bottom."

The captain made no reply. "Gerald," he said, "take your sister down to the hold—Dan Connor and Tim will arrange a secure place for her, and I put her under your charge—remember, you're to remain with her, and not to return on deck till I send for you."

Gerald looked very much disappointed, but he well knew that it would be vain to expostulate. He had fully expected to engage in the fight, or to "take part in the fun," as he called it. Norah had before this gone into the cabin, to which Gerald repaired, and with no very good grace delivered their father's orders. Without a murmur Norah prepared to obey them. The second mate and some of the men were engaged in dragging one of the guns aft. As she came on deck, Norah found her father standing near the companion-hatch. Embracing her, he kissed her brow and said, "Don't be alarmed, my child; we shall manage to

escape the Frenchman, I hope, and come off without damage. Go into your nest, now, with Gerald, and I hope before long I shall have a good report to give you."

As she went forwards towards the main hatchway she glanced at Owen; he sprang to her side and without stopping to ask leave assisted her below. It was a dreary place which had been prepared for her among sugar-hogsheads, rum casks, and packages of other West India produce. Dan Connor, who had been till that moment busy in arranging it, appeared with a lantern to light them the latter part of the way. Norah looked with no little dismay at the dark recess in which she and Gerald were to pass the period of the impending action.

"Shure, Miss Norah, you'll find it more aisy and pleasant than you think for," said Dan, who observed the expression of her countenance, "when the lantern's hung up, as I'll be doing to give you light; and I'd make bold to say that if you'd brought a book to read, or just some work to amuse yourself, you'd be after finding the time pass pleasantly enough away."

Norah, as may be imagined, felt little disposed to read or work, or to fancy that the time could pass pleasantly. She almost smiled at the idea. It appeared to her that it would be the most dreadful period of her existence. On entering, however, she found that Dan had arranged a seat with some cushions and a grating to keep her feet off any moisture which might have oozed out of the casks, Dan secured the lantern, as he proposed, to a sugar cask, while Owen pressed Norah's hand.

"Hope for the best, dearest," he whispered. "I'd have given worlds to save you from this; but we can trust to One who rules all things for protection, and we may still escape the threatened danger. A calm may come on before the Frenchman gets up with us, or an English ship of superior force may heave in sight—hope for the best; I must stay no longer. Gerald, you heard the captain's orders—let nothing induce you to quit your sister. I know your spirit, and that you'd rather be on deck; but your duty is to remain below, and by doing your duty, however much against the grain it may be, you'll be showing truer courage than by going where round shot and bullets may be flying round your head like hail."

"You are right, Mr Massey, and you may depend on my not quitting Norah, whatever happens;" and Gerald sat himself down on a tub which Dan had placed for him, and resolutely folded his arms as if he felt that in no other way could he keep his post. The next moment Owen sprang upon deck, followed by

Dan. Never before had Owen Massey been so anxious to avoid a fight—indeed, all on board were, for various reasons, much of the same mind. Captain Tracy was resolved to escape if he could, and to fight only if it would enable him to do so. The hope that a British ship of war might heave in sight had only just occurred to Owen when below with Norah, and as soon as he returned on deck he went up to the mast-head, almost expecting to see another ship standing towards the enemy; but though he swept the whole horizon with his glass, not a sail appeared in sight, and he had quickly to descend to attend to his duties. The crew, meantime, were bringing up powder and shot from below, and loading the guns. Two of the longest pieces had already been run out astern; they were of brass, and of small bore, but were able to send a shot as far as most guns in use in those days. The others were smaller pieces, carried for the purpose of defending the ship, should she be attacked by any of the picaroons, at that time the pest of the Caribbean Sea. When Owen again looked out, he saw that the enemy had considerably overhauled them since he went below. Had he before entertained any doubt about the character of the vessel chasing them, it completely vanished, and his experienced eye assured him that she must be a French privateer. The wind also continued as steady as at first, and with deep regret he was convinced that the stranger was superior to the *Ouzel Galley* on any point of sailing, whether before the wind, going free, or close-hauled; while her numerous crew would give her every possible advantage in manoeuvring, or repairing damages should any of her spars or rigging be knocked away.

Meantime, poor Norah and her brother remained in their dark cell far down in the hold of the ship, listening anxiously for any sounds which might betoken the commencement of the action. The air was close and redolent of unsavoury odours, and would of itself have been sufficient to weigh down their young hearts; it might be a place of safety, but they would both of them infinitely rather have been on deck and able to see what was going forward. Norah sat with her hands clasped on the couch Dan had arranged for her; while Gerald, soon losing patience, got up, and, as there was no room to pace backwards and forwards, could only give vent to his feelings by an occasional stamp of the foot, as he doubled his fists and struck out at an imaginary Frenchman.

"Oh, I do hope we shall thrash that fellow," he exclaimed, "big as he looks. I am glad our father didn't determine to give in without fighting. It wouldn't have been like him if he had, though the second mate advised him to do so. I should have

thought Mr Carnegan was full of pluck, but he appeared to me to show the white feather, and I'm not at all sure how he'll behave—not that it much matters, for I am very certain that Owen will make the men stand to their guns as long as there's a shot in the locker."

"I only hope that we may avoid fighting altogether," said Norah. "Owen thought it possible that an English man-of-war might appear in sight and put the enemy to flight, or that we may keep ahead till nightfall, and then manage to escape."

"Depend upon it, the Frenchman is coming up much too fast to give us any chance of keeping ahead till dark—we must not expect that. I have more confidence in our knocking away some of his spars; Owen is a first-rate shot, and if it can be done he'll do it. Don't be cast down, Norah; it would never have done for you to remain where you might have run the risk of being hit. Our father was right in sending you here, though I wish he had allowed me to stay on deck—but then, you see, you couldn't be left alone; and if, after all, the Frenchmen do take us, why, there would have been no one to protect you. That consoles me for remaining here, and if the worst happens I'll fight for you. See, I've brought a cutlass, and a brace of pistols, and it would be a hard matter for any one to get in here without my leave."

"Oh, it would be dreadful!" cried Norah, shuddering at the thought of the ship being captured—for she could not conceal from herself that such might too probably be the case. "Don't attempt to fight if any of our enemies should find their way down here—it would be utterly useless, and only exasperate them."

"Well, perhaps they won't find their way down here," said Gerald, who directly he had uttered anything calculated to alarm his sister was anxious to remedy the mistake; "let us try and talk of something else, and wait patiently for what may happen."

The proposal was not as easily carried out as made; in another minute Gerald was again talking of what might or might not occur. Some time went by. "Hark! hark! what is that?" exclaimed Norah suddenly, as the boom of a gun, which from its faintness showed that it must have been fired at a distance, reached their ears.

"There comes the first shot, but it didn't strike us—the Frenchman is trying whether he has got us within range," said Gerald.

"It shows, though, that the enemy must be very near," cried Norah.

"It will be the sooner over," said Gerald. "We shall hear our guns go off soon—they'll make a much greater noise; but don't be frightened, Norah dear—they, at all events, will not injure you."

"I am not thinking of myself," answered Norah, "but for those on deck, and for our poor father—he is still so ill and so little able to bear all this anxiety—and for Owen, should they be struck by those dreadful cannon-balls."

"The round shot, you mean," said Gerald; "but they are not to be so much dreaded, after all. They may fall pretty thickly aboard without doing any harm. I've heard some of our men who were in the last war say that they've known ships firing away at each other for an hour or more without anybody being hit. Hark! there's another gun; that came from the enemy, but the shot missed us. I wonder we don't begin to fire—we soon shall, though, no doubt about that. I wish that I had brought down the boat's compass with us, to know how we were steering; we are keeping, however, on the same tack as before—I can tell that by the heel of the ship."

Norah, while Gerald was talking, held her breath, expecting every moment to hear the guns go off with a loud roar, not aware how much the sound would be deadened before it reached the hold. Neither she nor Gerald had at first observed the increased motion of the ship, or that she was heeling over to larboard considerably more than at first. Gerald now, however, remarked it.

"The breeze has freshened," he exclaimed, "though I don't know if that will be in our favour. I wish that our father had not told me to stay here without moving—I would run upon deck to see how things are going on, and be back in a moment."

"Gerald, not for my sake but for your own, I earnestly pray you to remain—remember, our father ordered you not to leave this, whatever might happen," exclaimed Norah.

"Yes, I know that; I was only saying what I should like to do," answered Gerald.

Nearly another minute elapsed, during which not a word was spoken; then came a much louder report than had before been heard.

"That was one of our guns, I am sure of it," exclaimed Gerald; though, from its deadness, Norah could scarcely believe that it was from one of the *Ouzel Galley's* guns.

"Hurrah! we've begun at last," cried Gerald, "no fear; I shouldn't be surprised to find that the shot had knocked away one of the enemy's topsail yards."

Another and another gun followed in rapid succession; at intervals could be clearly distinguished the firing of the enemy's guns, and every now and then a report succeeded by a loud thud, showing that the shot had struck some part of the *Ouzel Galley*.

"Fire away, my boys, fire away!" shouted Gerald. "I wish that I could be on deck, even if I'd nothing better to do than hand up the powder!"

Norah again entreated him to remain. For some time the firing continued, but from the sound of the enemy's guns it was pretty clear that the ships had not yet got to close quarters.

"Sure, we must be giving it them," cried Gerald. Scarcely had he spoken when there came a loud crashing sound, as if one of the masts had been knocked away and had fallen on the deck. Cries and shrieks of injured men writhing in pain penetrated even to the depths of the hold.

"Oh that some one would come and tell us what has happened!" exclaimed Norah. "I wonder our father or Owen don't send—it must be something dreadful."

"I've heard of ships holding out, even though a mast has been shot away," said Gerald; "we don't know what has happened to the enemy—perhaps she is worse off than we are."

Not another gun was fired from the deck of the *Ouzel Galley*; that was a bad sign, and presently afterwards there came a violent concussion and a grating sound, as if one ship had run alongside the other.

"Gerald, oh, what is taking place?" cried Norah, seizing her brother's hand.

"We are about to be boarded, or perhaps we are going to board the enemy," he answered; "I don't see why one thing shouldn't happen as well as the other."

"I am afraid it is as you first suggested," said Norah. "Hark to those loud shouts; they are the voices of Frenchmen—they must have boarded us. I hear their feet tramping on deck, and there they come down below. Our people must have been quickly overpowered; what resistance could such a mere handful offer to the numerous crew of the enemy? Oh! our poor father and Owen—can they wish us to remain here? They may be wounded and bleeding to death, and may require our help."

It was now Gerald's turn to insist on obeying orders. "Norah, Norah! stay where you are," he exclaimed. "Should the Frenchmen have boarded us, you might meet them, and we can't tell how they might behave. If any come here they'll have to repent their audacity," he added, placing himself with a pistol in one hand and a cutlass in the other at the entrance of Norah's retreat.

"I must fight for you if they come down here—it is my duty, and I'll do it," answered Gerald to his sister's expostulations; for she dreaded lest, by offering resistance, he might induce the enemy to kill him. He, however, would not listen to her entreaties. "At all events, don't speak, Norah," he said; "the Frenchmen may hear us and find us out—whereas if we remain quiet we may escape discovery till the boarders have gone back to their own ship and ours is left in charge of a prize crew, and we may be very sure that neither our father nor Owen will be induced to quit the *Ouzel Galley* without us."

Norah saw the prudence of this advice. She wisely also put out the lantern, the light from which would very certainly have betrayed their hiding-place.

We must now return on deck. As soon as Norah and Gerald had gone below, the captain addressed the crew and asked whether they would stick by him and assist in making every effort he could devise for escaping. They one and all declared that they were ready to fight to the last to preserve the *Ouzel Galley* from capture and to escape a French prison.

"Then we'll make a running fight of it, my lads," he said. "The enemy has probably much heavier metal and many more men than we have, but our two guns will be of as much service as her twenty if we can keep her as she now is, right astern—and that's what I intend to do."

The second mate had narrowly scanned the French ship. "I can tell you what, Captain Tracy," he said at length, "you haven't a chance of escaping from her. I know her and her commander



well, and not a better or more determined seaman ever walked the deck of a ship. I have reason to be grateful to you for the way I have been treated on board this vessel, and to your first mate for saving my life; and for your own sake I would advise you to haul down your flag at once and surrender—you will probably be far better treated than if you lead the Frenchman a long chase and are taken at last."

"I am obliged to you for your good intentions in giving the advice you do," said Captain Tracy, "but my principle is to hold out till the last hope of success has gone—and we haven't quite arrived at that point yet. If you don't wish to fight you can go below."

"You mistake me," answered the second mate, in a somewhat angry tone, and he walked away. The next instant a puff of smoke was seen to issue from the bows of the French ship, and a shot came flying across the water; but it fell short of the *Ouzel Galley*.

"Stand by to fire our stern-chasers, Mr Massey," sang out the captain, "but we'll let the enemy find out the range before we throw a shot away."

The captain did not fail to keep his eye on the canvas, to be ready to alter his course should there be the slightest shift of wind. The second mate continued walking the deck in sullen silence, determined apparently to take no further part in defence of the ship. Owen stood ready, match in hand, to fire the stern-chasers. In the course of a few minutes the Frenchman fired another shot; it went ricocheting over the water, and passed the quarter of the *Ouzel Galley*.

"Our guns will carry as far as the Frenchman's," exclaimed the captain. "Now see what you can do, Owen."

The first mate, looking along his gun, fired; the shot struck the enemy. The crew of the *Ouzel Galley* watched eagerly for the effect of the shot. It went through the Frenchman's fore-topsail. A loud cheer showed their satisfaction.

"Well done, Owen—fire the other and try to wing him," cried the captain. While the crew were loading the first gun, Owen fired the second. The captain, who had his glass turned towards the enemy, shouted, "Hurrah! it's struck the fore-topsail yard."

The spar, however, remained standing, and some of the Frenchmen were seen running aloft to fish it. Owen sprang back

to the first gun he had fired, and again discharged it; but the enemy at that moment kept away, and before what damage it had effected could be seen, clouds of smoke issued from her, and the shot from her whole broadside came rushing towards the chase. They were mostly aimed high, and either went through the sails or passed by without doing any injury; but two struck the quarter, and another glanced along the side, leaving a long white furrow.

"Those shots were well aimed, but if she plays that trick often we shall have a better chance of escaping," observed the captain, calmly; "try another shot, Owen."

The French ship quickly came up to the wind. Owen again fired, and one of the Frenchmen was seen to drop to the deck. The enemy had now brought a gun on the forecastle, from which they opened fire in return to the *Ouzel Galley's* stern-chasers. Both vessels then fired away as fast as the guns could be loaded and run out; but though most of Owen's shot told with some effect, the damage he produced was speedily repaired, while several of the Frenchmen's shot struck the *Ouzel Galley*, though as yet no one had been injured. The former was, however, in the mean time, creeping up nearer and nearer, and also, from sailing closer to the wind, weathering on the chase. The second mate, who had been walking the deck with as much calmness as if no fight was going on, again came up to the captain.

"I before warned you that it would be useless to contend with yonder ship," he said, "and before many minutes are over we shall have the shot from her broadside crashing on board us. By holding out you risk your own and your people's lives, and the lives of others dear to you—for it is more than possible that another broadside will send the ship and all in her to the bottom. We must—"

Before the captain could reply the enemy fired his two foremost guns, the shot from which shattering the bulwarks sent pieces of splinter flying about, one of which struck Carnegan on the arm.

"It might have been worse," he observed; and after staggering a few paces he recovered himself. He added, "I will thank some one to bind up my wound."

"Shure, I'll be glad enough to do that same," exclaimed Dan Connor; "and if you'll just step into your cabin, sir, we'll have you all to rights in a jiffy."

"I shall not be the only one hit," observed the second mate, as he allowed Dan to take off his coat.

Still the captain had not abandoned all hopes of escaping, and kept to his resolution of persevering to the last. He ordered the guns on the lee side to be hauled over to windward, and as they could be brought to bear on the enemy they were fired; but what effect they produced was not perceptible, as both vessels were encircled in smoke. Several more shot struck the *Ouzel Galley*, and at length two of her gallant crew fell, desperately wounded, to the deck, and the next instant a third had his head taken off. Still no one thought of giving in.

"We'll shift the stern-chasers, Owen," cried the captain; "they'll soon be of little use where they are."

"Ay, ay, sir," answered the first mate, and he with several hands began to haul one of the guns along the deck, when again the enemy fired his whole broadside. The guns had been elevated—the shot whistled overhead—a crash was heard, and down came the main-topmast of the *Ouzel Galley* on her deck, striking dead another of her crew. The survivors made a desperate effort to clear the wreck and prevent the fore-topmast from sharing the same fate, but even the captain now saw that all hope of escaping the enemy must be abandoned. On looking round to direct Owen to haul down the ensign, to his grief he saw that he too was wounded, and apparently severely so from the stream of blood flowing from his shoulder. At the same moment the French ship, which had rapidly shot up abeam, ran alongside and, throwing grappling-irons on board the chase, held her fast, while a party of the enemy headed by an officer leaped on the deck from the bows. Resistance was vain, but a few of the British crew instantly attempted to defend themselves with their cutlasses, the fallen topmast serving as a barricade; but the Frenchmen scrambling over it, the former were quickly driven aft. Owen had in the mean time hauled down the ensign by the captain's orders, and shouted out that they surrendered. The enemy, however, enraged at the stubborn resistance they had met with, were rushing aft, when the second mate appeared from the cabin with his arm in a sling and encountered the officer who led the boarders.

"You will not injure a beaten foe!" he exclaimed. "You know me, though you must be surprised to find me where I am. See, my shipmates have surrendered and can offer no further resistance."

As he spoke he put out his right hand, which the French officer grasped, and together they walked aside, where they held a hurried conversation while the survivors of the crew threw down their weapons. The Frenchmen, however, while their leader's eye was off them, rushed into the cabin and began ransacking the lockers and appropriating such articles as took their fancy. Dan, on observing this, sprang before them and placed himself at the door of Norah's berth, into which he would allow no one to enter.

"You can't come in here, mounseers," he exclaimed; "shure, you'll be too polite to frighten a lady out of her wits—and it's already fright enough she's had with hearing all the hullabaloo you've been after making."

Dan hoped by this artifice to prevent the Frenchmen searching for Norah, which he was afraid they might have done had they broken into the cabin and discovered female gear. As it was, he made them understand that the captain's wife was the occupant of the cabin.

Meantime Owen, overcome by loss of blood, sank exhausted on the deck. The French officer, a fair, slightly built man, with more the appearance of a Briton than a Gaul, now approached Captain Tracy and addressed him in English with but little French accent. "I must compliment you on your bravery, though I cannot do so on your discretion in attempting to resist me," he said. "Your vessel has become my prize, and, as I understand that your cargo is of value, I must send you into a French port; but having heard that you have the yellow fever on board, I will not remove any of your people to my ship, though I will leave an adequate prize crew to navigate her."

Just then the report of a pistol was heard, and a shriek was heard coming from the hold of the ship.

"What's that?" exclaimed the French officer.

"My daughter!—save her from your people!" cried Captain Tracy, hurrying towards the main hatchway. The more active Frenchman sprang before him and descended, followed by the captain and Carneghan, who, suffering from his wound, was less able than they were to move quickly. The Frenchman by his loud shouts soon let his men know that he was approaching. On reaching the hold he found Gerald in the hands of several of them, while Norah was endeavouring to protect him from their rage which he had excited.

"Let go that boy!" shouted the French officer, at the same time drawing his sword to enforce his order. He was quickly obeyed. "Who is this young lady?" he asked, turning to the captain; "I was not aware that she was on board."

"She is my daughter, sir; and I sent her down here to be out of danger during the fighting. I am sure I can trust to your gallantry to protect her," said Captain Tracy.

"You may depend on my doing so," answered the French officer; then addressing Gerald, he said, "Come here, my lad—you are a brave boy, I see, and thinking my people were about to insult your sister, you fought for her. The fellow you wounded deserved his punishment. Return on deck and go on board your own ship," he continued, addressing his crew in French. The men quickly obeyed him. "And now, young lady, let me escort you to your cabin," he added; "you need be under no further anxiety, as no one will venture to intrude on you."

Carnegan had before this reached the hold. He was about to assist Norah in ascending.

"I must claim that honour," said the Frenchman; and, offering his hand, he conducted Norah out of the dark place. No sooner had they reached the deck than her eyes fell on Owen lying wounded on the poop. Disregarding every one, she threw herself down by his side.

"Oh, speak to me, Owen—tell me where you are hurt!" she exclaimed. Owen tried to answer her, but could only point to his wounded shoulder. "He will bleed to death!" she cried. "Run, Gerald—get some bandages from the cabin. Oh, father, come and help me!"

"I will send my surgeon to dress the young officer's wound," said the French captain, approaching; "he will attend also to the other injured men, and I regret that I cannot remain near you to be of any further use."

Carnegan had watched Norah; an angry frown passed across his brow, but he made no remark. The French surgeon was quickly on board; he desired that Owen should be carried to his cabin, where he speedily dressed his wound and gave him a stimulant which restored him to consciousness. He then left directions with Norah how to treat his patient, assuring her that the hurt was very slight, and that he would soon recover.

"Come, my friend," said the French officer to Carnegan; "as you are not from the West Indies, we shall have no fear of your giving us the fever. I must therefore beg for your company—you will require the attendance of the surgeon, and one wounded man is enough for that young lady to look after."

Carnegan appeared to be expostulating; but the French officer refused to accede to his request, and hurried him on board, without allowing him even the opportunity of wishing farewell to Norah.

The French crew had in the mean time brought a fresh topmast on board the *Ouzel Galley*, to supply the place of the one shot away, and had been busily employed in getting it up. They had not, however, completed the work when the look-out from the mast-head of the French ship shouted, "A sail to the south-east!" and they were immediately summoned back to their own ship. A young lieutenant and seven men, forming the prize crew, then came on board the *Ouzel Galley*, the surgeon being the last person to quit her.

"Who is the officer who boarded us, and what is the name of your ship?" asked Captain Tracy, after expressing his thanks to the surgeon for his attention.

"He is Captain Thurot, and his ship is the *Coquille*, the most celebrated privateer out of Dunkirk," was the answer. "It is positively an honour to be captured by him—let that be your consolation, my dear sir."

"Faith, it's but a poor consolation, then," answered Captain Tracy; "but I thank you for suggesting even a shadow of comfort. I will follow your directions with regard to my poor wounded fellows, and once again beg to express my gratitude for what you have done for them."

The *Coquille* immediately casting off her prize, made all sail in chase of the stranger, the rapidly approaching shades of evening soon concealing her from sight. The French prize crew, aided by the seamen of the *Ouzel Galley*, went on with the work which had been left incomplete of setting up the main-topmast rigging and getting the yard across. Night compelled them to knock off before the work was finished. The wind, however, continued steady, and the ship ran on almost dead before it under her head-sails the French officer, Lieutenant Vinoy, was a remarkably polite young gentleman, but whether or not he was a good seaman remained to be proved. He expressed his wish in no way to incommode Mademoiselle, as he called Norah, and

declared that he should be perfectly satisfied to occupy the second mate's cabin, and would on no account turn her or her father out of theirs. Besides himself, he had but one person, a petty officer, capable of taking charge of a watch, so that he had but very little time to bestow on the young lady those attentions which, under other circumstances, he might have been inclined to pay. She too was fully engaged in attending on Owen and in visiting with her father the wounded and sick men.

The night passed off quietly, and the whole of the first day was spent by all hands in setting up the topmast. It was not till supper-time that the lieutenant entered the cabin, and, throwing himself on a chair, expressed his satisfaction that the task was at length accomplished. "And your men, captain, deserve credit for the way they have worked," he observed; "they could not have done so more willingly had they been performing the task for their own advantage. For my part, I am pretty well worn out—you may be sure that I shall sleep soundly during my watch below."

"Do you generally sleep soundly, Lieutenant Vinoy?" asked Gerald.

"Yes, I am celebrated for it," answered the lieutenant, laughing; "it takes a good deal to awake me when once my eyes are closed. I am never idle, you see; I work hard and sleep hard—that is as it should be."

Gerald recollected the lieutenant's remark, and a thought at that moment came into his head which he kept there, turning it and round and over and over till he carried it into execution.

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### Chapter Three.

**A heavy gale ahead—The wind becomes fair—Gerald's plan to recover the ship—Carries it out—Norah's resolution—The lieutenant caught napping—The Frenchmen's weapons secured—Busson and the French crew overpowered—Gerald and Norah hold Lieutenant Vinoy in check—The *Ouzel Galley* regained—A course steered for Waterford—Precautions against recapture—Approach the land.**

The *Ouzel Galley* had run very nearly as far north as the latitude of Ushant, though she was still some way to the westward. Her

crew had got on very well with their captors, who called them *bons garçons*, and were perfectly willing to fraternise with them. No one coming on board would have suspected their relative positions. The lieutenant made himself at home in the cabin; he was polite and courteous to Norah and Captain Tracy, and in no way presumed on being, as he was, the real commander of the ship. Gerald, however, did not seem inclined to associate with him, and seldom came into the cabin when he was there. Gerald, indeed, spent most of his time in assisting Norah to attend on Owen, by whose side he would sit patiently for hours together; or else he was holding secret confabulations with Dan Connor and Tim Maloney. Although Owen had been greatly weakened by loss of blood, it saved him from fever, and his wound, which was not deep, rapidly healed. Of this, however, Gerald advised Norah not to tell the lieutenant. The other wounded and pick men continued in their berths, apparently making no progress towards recovery; so that, of the original crew of the *Ouzel Galley*, there were only five hands besides Gerald and Tim fit for duty. These, of course, the Frenchmen, with their officer, considered that they were perfectly able to keep in order. The weather, which had hitherto been especially favourable, now greatly changed for the worse; a strong north-easterly gale springing up threatened to blow the *Ouzel Galley* far away to the westward. Lieutenant Vinoy was in despair; he had been anticipating the pleasure of carrying his prize into Boulogne, the port to which Captain Thurot had ordered him to take her, in the course of two or three days—and now she might be kept out for a week, or three weeks for that matter, and the risk of being recaptured greatly increased. Still he did his best to hold his ground, keeping the ship close-hauled, now on one tack, now on the other; while either he or his mate, Jacques Busson, were ever on deck ready to take advantage of any change of wind.

"I shall sleep soundly when this vile wind from the eastward has ceased to blow," exclaimed the lieutenant one day, on coming down to dinner.

"I hope you will," said Gerald, looking him boldly in the face. "You deserve some rest after keeping watch and watch so long."

"Gerald," said Norah, when they were together in the cabin, the captain being on deck, "I suspect that you are thinking of attempting to recover the vessel, and that our father has not been told what you intend to do."

"Why should you suppose so?" asked Gerald.



"Because I see you constantly talking to the men in a way you never used to do, and because you avoid the French lieutenant and speak to him in so strange a manner," answered Norah.

"I won't deny that I have a plan in my head; but you are to know nothing about it till it has succeeded," replied Gerald. "One thing I'll tell you, that I'm very sure it can't fail of success if all hands are true to each other—and, Norah, don't be alarmed if you hear that two or three more of our people are down with the fever; and if our father says anything, you can just remark that I told you I was sure they would very soon be well again."

"I have confidence in your discretion," said Norah, "but I pray that there may be no necessity for violence, and that neither the young officer nor any of the men may be injured."

"That depends on circumstances," said Gerald; "no one wishes to hurt a hair of their heads if they behave themselves—if not, they must take the consequences."

The gale increasing, it taxed all the strength of the Frenchmen, and the few of the original crew who remained, to shorten sail; but anxious as Lieutenant Vinoy was to get into port, he refused to heave to, and continued beating the ship to windward. At length, one day, soon after noon, the wind began to decrease, and before dark a moderate breeze was blowing from the southward. Captain Tracy had every day taken an observation, the French officer not objecting to his doing so, and Gerald always asked him whereabouts they were, noting the spot carefully down on the chart when the lieutenant was on deck, so that his proceedings might not be remarked. This day, according to Gerald's calculations, they were exactly a hundred and fifty miles to the southward of Waterford. The night was cloudy, and, as there was no moon, it was darker than usual. One-half of the Frenchmen had turned in, as had Lieutenant Vinoy; Jacques Busson had the middle watch. Gerald had gone to his berth, but not to sleep; he merely pulled off his shoes and jacket, and then, lying down, drew the blanket over him. After waiting for about an hour he got up and groped his way to Lieutenant Vinoy's cabin; the door was partly open—the sound which issued from within showed that the French officer was fast asleep. Gerald cautiously entered and possessed himself of a brace of pistols which hung within reach of the lieutenant's hand at the head of his cot, as also of a sword suspended to the bulkhead. Carefully carrying them out, he then, quietly closing the door, made his way to Owen Massey's cabin.

"We could not have a better opportunity than the present," he whispered. "If you will get ready, I will call my father and warn Norah to keep quiet. Here are the lieutenant's pistols—do you take one of them, and I will carry the other and a sword to my father. You will have no difficulty in keeping the lieutenant shut up in his cabin, while I creep forward and get Pompey and Dan to come aft and secure Jacques Busson. Just as they do so I will give a whistle loud enough for you and my father to hear, and immediately you do so you both will spring on deck and overpower the man at the helm. The rest of our people are prepared to act as you have arranged; one of them will knock down the look-out forward, while the others will throw themselves upon the other Frenchmen and secure the hatches on those below. You wished Tim and me to keep ourselves free to act according to circumstances; Tim was to get into the boatswain's storeroom, and to cut as many lengths of rope as we shall require. He will have them in readiness for the moment they are wanted. There can be no mistake, I hope?"

"None, provided the Frenchmen don't take alarm," answered Owen. "You, at all events, understand the plan perfectly."

"We may carry it out, too, I trust, without bloodshed," said Gerald. "Shall I go forward and give the signal?"

"Yes. I feel well able to do my part, though my left arm may not be of as much use as I should wish," answered Owen. "Call your father and Norah, and then lose no time, or the lieutenant may be waking and give us more trouble than is necessary."

Gerald then crept back into the state cabin. He first went into Norah's berth, and uttered a few words in her ear in a low voice. She had not undressed, having been warned by Owen of what was likely to happen, and she had resolved to give every assistance in her power; though her arm was weak, she possessed nerve and courage, and might be able to keep watch over the French officer, or even to turn the scale in favour of her friends, should any part of the plan miscarry.

"Give me the pistol," she whispered; "I know that it is ready for use, as I saw the lieutenant loading it this afternoon."

"Do you think he suspected anything?" asked Gerald.

"That was no sign of his doing so," answered Norah; "he has frequently withdrawn the charges and reloaded his pistols since he came on board."

"All right, you shall have it," said Gerald; "but you mustn't mind shooting him if it is necessary. Remember, if you don't we may possibly be overpowered, and shall be much worse off than we are now."

"I hope that no such necessity may arise," answered Norah, and her voice trembled as she spoke.

"There, stay quiet till you're called, and I'll take the sword to our father," said Gerald. The captain was awake, and prepared for the attempt to recapture the ship, he and Owen having decided on the best plan for carrying it out. He took the sword which his son brought him—the lamp which swung from the deck above shed a feeble light throughout the cabin—he had just quickly dressed, when Norah appeared.

"I had wished you to remain in your berth till we had secured the Frenchmen," he whispered.

"Pray do not insist on my doing so," she answered. "I may be able to help you, and I cannot bear the thoughts of hiding away while you are exposed to danger. Do let me try to be of use, father; I shall run no greater risk than I should by keeping in my berth. See, Gerald has given me a pistol, and I know how to use it. It will serve, at all events, to frighten the Frenchmen."

The captain, seeing Norah was determined, at length consented to do as she proposed. Owen now joined them, and he and the captain crept to the foot of the companion-ladder, up part of which they mounted, to be in readiness to attack the man at the helm as soon as Gerald's signal should be heard. Meantime, Gerald had made his way on deck. He had on a dark jacket and trousers and dark worsted socks, and by creeping along close under the bulwarks he would be able, he hoped, to get forward without much risk of being seen. Jacques Busson, the officer of the watch, was slowly pacing the deck, now looking up at the canvas which like a dark pyramid seemed to tower into the sky, now addressing the man at the helm to keep the sails full or else to steer rather closer to the wind, now shouting to the look-out forward to ascertain that he was awake and attending to his duty. Gerald stopped to observe what Jacques Busson was about; he could distinguish the Frenchman's figure against the sky, as he paced backwards and forwards on the raised poop, halting now and then to take a glance to windward, and again taking a few steps towards the stern. The moment Gerald thought that his back was turned he again crept forward. He had no fear of being discovered by the man at the helm, whose eyes, dazzled by the binnacle lamp, were not likely to

distinguish him. Thus on he went, quickly doubling round the guns, till he reached the fore hatchway, down which he slipped without being perceived by either of the Frenchmen on deck, who were seated under the weather bulwarks, and, as he rightly concluded, with their eyes shut.

"We shall have no difficulty in tackling those two fellows," he thought. The Frenchmen were berthed on the starboard side of the forecabin, the *Ouzel Galley's* people on the larboard side; Gerald was thus easily able to find his friends. He had previously made all the arrangements with Dan and Pompey—they had communicated them to the rest of the crew, who only waited his arrival to carry them out. Gerald and Dan had undertaken to get possession of the Frenchmen's pistols. It was the most perilous part of the work to be performed, for should they be awakened they might give the alarm, and put the watch on deck on their guard. Both Dan and the black had noted accurately the places where the Frenchmen had put their weapons, who, instead of depositing the pistols under their pillows, had hung them up just above their heads, within reach of their hands, while their cutlasses lay by their sides. To remove the latter might be difficult without making a noise, and it was, besides, considered of less importance to get hold of them. Stealing silently across the fore-peak, Gerald and Dan reached one of the bunks; Dan then leaning over, felt for the occupant's pistol, which he carefully unhooked and handed to Gerald, who, almost breathless with eagerness, grasped it tightly. They then went to the next berth, and possessed themselves of the other weapons in the same manner. The third man turned as they approached, and uttered a few incoherent words; Dan and Gerald crouched down out of sight lest he should awake, but a loud snore showed them that there was no great fear of his doing that, and his pistols were successfully abstracted. The fourth man seemed restless, and at length raised himself on his shoulder, and looked out.

"Qui va là?" he asked in French. Gerald and Dan were standing in deep shade, and remained still as mice, scarcely daring to breathe. The Frenchman, seeing no one, must have thought that he had been dreaming, and again lying down composed himself to sleep. They waited till they heard him also begin to snore, and Dan then crept forward and got hold of his pistols. They each took one, and gave the remainder to their shipmates. Tim was then sent up, furnished with a piece of line, with directions to conceal himself close to the hatchway, down which he was to let the line hang, and his pulling it up was to be the signal that the Frenchmen were off their guard. On feeling it

pulled all the party below were to spring up on deck and overpower the crew forward. Gerald accompanied by Dan and Pompey were, however, to make their way aft in the same cautious manner in which he had come forward. The black, in order to run less risk of being discovered, had stripped himself naked, and oiled his body all over. The doing so was his own idea, and he grinned when he proposed it to Dan.

"I like one big eel, and if dey try to catch me I slip out of dere hands," he observed, chuckling.

"We could not hope for a better opportunity than the present," whispered Gerald into Dan's ear.

"All right, sir," answered Dan, touching Pompey and Tim. The former, as agreed on, noiseless as a cat, crept up on deck, when he immediately gave a tug to the string. Gerald, with Dan and Pompey, followed, and, crawling on all-fours, began to make their way aft. The booms and boats would have concealed them for some part of the distance from Jacques Busson even had it been daylight; they therefore ran no risk of being discovered till they reached the after-part of the quarter-deck. Pompey had now to play the chief part in the drama. Crawling up on the lee side of the poop, he lay flat on the deck, while Gerald and Dan stole after him, ready to spring up to his aid directly he had thrown himself on Busson, leaving the helmsman to be dealt with by the captain and Owen. Pompey had just reached the break of the poop, having waited for the moment that Jacques Busson's back was towards him: a few seconds passed, when the Frenchman again turned round, and, advancing a pace or two forward, shouted to the man on the look-out. No answer came. "Bête," he exclaimed, "he is asleep. I must arouse him with a rope's end."

As he spoke he advanced, about to descend the steps leading to the quarter-deck—at that moment Pompey, who had been watching him as a serpent does its expected victim, springing to his feet, threw his arms round the Frenchman's neck, while he at the same moment shoved a large lump of oakum into his mouth before he could even utter a cry. Dan, quick as lightning, joined him, while Gerald whistled shrilly the promised signal to his father and Owen. It was heard too by Tim, who pulling the line, the rest of the *Ouzel Galley's* crew sprang up, some throwing themselves on the two Frenchmen slumbering under the weather bulwarks before they had time to draw their pistols. The men on the fore-castle, however, aroused by the noise, fired theirs at their advancing opponents; but owing to the darkness and their hurry the bullets missed their aim, and just as they

got their hands on their cutlasses they were both knocked over with well-planted blows in their faces, and brought to the deck, at the same instant that Tim, to whom the duty had been confided, closed down the hatch on the watch below. The helmsman, on hearing the scuffle, was turning his head to see what was the matter, when he found his arms pinioned by the captain and Owen. On seeing this, Gerald ran forward to where Tim had concealed the rope. He soon returned with a sufficient number of lengths to lash the arms of Busson and the men, while Tim carried the rest of the rope to his shipmates forward, who were not long securing the three Frenchmen. The remaining four of the French crew, who had been aroused by the scuffle, were now making desperate efforts to force their way up on deck, and one on the top of the ladder had just succeeded in lifting up the hatch, when Tim saw his head protruding above the combing.

"Bear a hand here, or shure the mounseers will be out of the trap," he shouted, at the same time seizing a capstan-bar, which was close at hand, and dealing a blow with it at the head of the Frenchman, who fell stunned off the ladder, back upon his companions following at his heels. Notwithstanding this, immediately they had recovered themselves they again attempted to get up, and another man had succeeded in raising half his body above the hatchway. Tim attacked him as he had done the first; the man, however, who was a powerful fellow, grasped the capstan-bar, and getting his knee on the combing was about to deal a blow at Tim which would have felled him to the deck, when one of the English crew, attracted by his cries, sprang to his assistance, and, wrenching the weapon from the Frenchman's hands, struck him dead. Two more only had now to be disposed of; they, still in ignorance of the fate of their companions, sprang up the hatchway, and before they had time to gain their feet were thrown down and secured. The man who had fallen below was groaning heavily.

"He'll do no harm," observed Pat Casey.

"Arrah, don't be too shure of that," said Tim; "if he was to come to life, he'd be after letting loose the others. It will be wiser to lash him too; and unless the dead man is kilt entirely, I'd advise that we prevent him from doing mischief."

Pat felt the Frenchman's head. "Shure, I never knew a man come to life with a hole like this in his skull," he remarked, "but to make shure in case of accidents, we'll heave him overboard;" and without more ado the body of the Frenchman, who was undoubtedly dead, was shoved through the foremost port.

Lieutenant Vinoy had not vainly boasted that he was a sound sleeper, for notwithstanding the scuffle over his head, he did not awake; and happily Norah, who had been stationed at his cabin door to keep him in check should he attempt to break out, was not called upon to exercise her courage. The two events which have been described were, it will be understood, taking place at the same time. During those exciting moments no one thought of what the ship was about; the consequence was that she flew up into the wind, and it became necessary to box her off. All hands were required for this purpose—the fore-yards had to be braced round, the after-yards squared away. Owen, from his wound, being the least able to exert himself, went to the helm, the captain hauling away with the rest of the crew.

"Gerald, do you go forward and keep a look-out on our prisoners," cried the captain. "If their arms by chance are not securely lashed, one or more of them may be getting free and setting the others at liberty. Call Tim Maloney to help you."

Gerald was about to obey this order, when the sound of loud knocking and Norah's voice came from below, exclaiming, "The lieutenant is awake and trying to break out of his cabin." Gerald heard it, and shouting to Tim to look after the Frenchmen forward, he sprang down the companion-ladder. He was not a moment too soon, for the French officer, awaking and believing from the sounds which reached him that something was the matter, had leaped out of bed with the intention of hastening on deck, when he found the door fastened on him—then, hearing the captain issuing orders, he guessed truly what had occurred. Supposing that there might yet be time to regain possession of the ship, he frantically endeavoured to break open the door. The only weapon he could discover was the leg of a stool, which having wrenched off, he managed with it to prise open the door. The light from the state cabin fell on him as he appeared at the opening; just at that moment Gerald sprang down from the deck. Catching sight of the lieutenant, he presented his pistol.

"Stay, monsieur," he exclaimed, "if you venture out of your cabin, I shall be under the disagreeable necessity of shooting you."

The Frenchman hesitated, for, the light glancing on the pistol-barrel, he recognised his own weapon, which he knew never missed fire, and showed him also that he was totally unarmed. Gerald saw his advantage. "Let me advise you, monsieur, to go back and sit down quietly, and no harm will happen to you," he continued. "The ship is ours, and we intend to keep her."

"Parbleu!" exclaimed the Frenchman, shrugging his shoulders; "you have indeed gained an advantage over me."

"Very true—but not an unfair one," said Gerald, laughing, but still keeping his pistol pointed at the officer, who now caught sight of Norah, also with a pistol in her hand, standing a little behind her brother. He might have made an attempt to spring upon Gerald and wrench the weapon from his hand, but from the determined look of the young lady he thought, in all probability, that she would fire over her brother's head should he do so. He therefore stepped back and sat down on the only remaining stool in the cabin, folding his arms with an air of resignation.

"I acknowledge myself defeated," he exclaimed; "but when I have a young lady as an opponent my gallantry forbids me to resist."

"It all comes of being a sound sleeper, monsieur," said Gerald, "but if you had kept your weather eye open it might not have happened. However, you may turn in again now and sleep as soundly as you like till we got into Waterford harbour, where we shall be, I hope, if the wind holds fair, in another day or two. But don't agitate yourself we'll treat you as politely as you treated us, except that we shall be compelled to keep you a prisoner, in case you should try again to turn the tables on us."

The ship had now been brought round; the head-yards were squared, and the course laid for Waterford. Still there was a great deal to be done; it was necessary to secure the prisoners, so that there might be no risk of their rising. Jacques Busson was a powerful and determined fellow, and he would to a certainty, if he had the opportunity, get free and try to set his countrymen at liberty. The lieutenant also, though addicted to sleeping soundly, was likely to be wide enough awake for the future, and would in all probability try to regain possession of the ship. He was therefore requested to confine himself to his cabin.

"I am sorry to treat you so inhospitably," said Captain Tracy, "but necessity compels me, and I hope that it will be but for a short time. I must warn you, however, if you attempt to break out, that we shall be obliged to secure you as we have done your men; but to save you from temptation, we shall secure your cabin door on the outside in a way which will prevent you from doing so. If, however, you will give me your promise not to attempt to regain your liberty, you will be treated with no further rigour."



"I must make a virtue of necessity," answered the lieutenant; "it is a very disagreeable one, but I submit." And without more ado he threw off his coat and quietly turned into his cot.

"Don't trust him, Gerald, whatever he may say," whispered Captain Tracy, "till we have the door firmly secured."

"Ay, ay, father," answered Gerald; "if he shows his face at the door without leave, I'll make him draw it back again pretty quickly."

Pompey had been left to watch over Jacques Busson and the man who had been serving at the wheel. He had no pistol, but instead he held in his hand a sharp, long-bladed sheath-knife, which effectually kept the prisoners from stirring. He evidently took especial delight in his office, and reluctantly consented to drag Jacques Busson into a cabin, where it was arranged that he should be confined, but at the same time with his arms and legs firmly secured. The rest of the men were carried down into the forecabin, and were placed in their bunks, the captain having examined each of them to be certain that they were lashed in a way from which they could not liberate themselves.

Morning dawned soon after these arrangements had been made. Jacques Busson grumbled greatly at the treatment he had received.

"What for you make all dis fuss?" said Pompey, who was standing sentry over him. "You want to take us into French port—we take you into Irish port. Waterford berry nice place, and when we get dere we take you out of limbo, and you live like one gentleman."

"Sacré!" answered the Frenchman, who had only caught a word or two of what Pompey had said, "if we fall in with a French ship before we get there, I'll pay you off, mon garçon, for nearly strangling me with your greasy arms."

Pompey only grinned a reply. There was no use wasting words, considering that neither understood the other's language. The lieutenant took matters more philosophically than his inferior. He was, however, not to be trusted, and either Gerald or Dan kept watch at his door with a loaded pistol. The arms and legs of the other men were too securely lashed to afford much risk of their getting loose; still, a trusty man was stationed over them, as there was no doubt that they would make the attempt could they gain the opportunity, and if one could cast off his lashings he might speedily set the others at liberty.

The sea was smooth; the sun shone brightly; and the *Ouzel Galley* made good way towards Waterford. She was, however, upwards of a hundred miles from that port, and might before reaching it fall in with another French ship. She was, indeed, now in a part of the ocean in which privateers were likely to be cruising, on the look-out for homeward-bound vessels. It was necessary, therefore, to avoid any strange sail till her character could be positively ascertained. A hand was accordingly stationed aloft to give timely notice should a sail appear in sight. This, of course, weakened the crew, who were already insufficient to work the ship; the wounded men, though they had aided in overpowering the Frenchmen, were but little capable of performing continuous work. Owen felt his wound very painful, yet he persisted in attending to his duty, and could scarcely be persuaded to lie down on the sofa for a short time to rest, while the captain took his watch on deck. Gerald was highly applauded by his father and Owen for his courage and judgment, which had so much contributed to the recapture of the vessel; even the French lieutenant expressed his admiration of the way he had behaved.

"If young English boys are so brave and cool, no wonder that we should have been overpowered," he observed. "I only wish that we had had a French boy on board, and it is not impossible that he might have discovered your plot and counteracted it. The next time I have charge of a prize, I will place a French boy to watch the English boys, and then we shall see which is the sharpest."

"I don't know which may prove the sharpest, but I am ready to fight any two French boys of my own age I have ever met in my life," answered Gerald, laughing; "first one come on, and then the other, or both together, provided they'll keep in front, or let me have a wall at my back, when they're welcome to do their worst."

"Ah, you are too boastful," said the lieutenant.

"Pardon me, monsieur, not at all. I am only sticking up for the honour of Old Ireland," answered Gerald.

The *Ouzel Galley* was drawing nearer to her port, and the chances of recapture diminished; still there was another night's run, and no one liked to boast till they were out of the fire. The crew of the *Ouzel Galley* were pretty well worn out, and it was with the greatest difficulty many of them could keep their eyes open. Perhaps the Frenchmen counted on this, and the hope that they yet might regain their liberty prevented them from

losing their spirits, and they amused themselves by singing snatches of songs and every now and then shouting out to each other. They were also well supplied with food, and as much grog as they chose to drink.

"It's shure to comfort their hearts," observed Dan, as he went round with a big can and a tin cup; "besides, they'll be less likely to prove troublesome."

The night came on; the captain, Owen, and Gerald did their best to encourage the men and to urge them to keep awake, however sleepy they might feel, continually going among them and reminding them that in a few hours more they might turn in and sleep for as many hours as they might like at a stretch, without the fear of being knocked on the head and thrown overboard. "And, my lads," observed the captain, "if the Frenchmen retake us, depend upon it that's the way we shall be treated—they'll not give us another chance."

The only person who slept that night was Norah, who, although she had not gone through any physical exertion, had felt more anxiety than any one, from knowing the risk those whom she loved were about to run. It would be difficult to describe her feelings as she saw her father and Owen steal upon dock to attack the man at the helm; and often during that night she started up, believing that the scene was again being enacted.

The wind continued fair; the *Ouzel Galley* held on her course, and no suspicious sail came near her during the night.

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## Chapter Four.

**Land in sight—A suspicious sail—The Coquille again—Many a slip between the cup and the lip—Norah and Gerald sent off with Owen—The wind changes—Recalled—The Coquille chases the Ouzel Galley into the harbour—Safe at last—Captain Tracy and Norah visit Mr and Miss Ferris—Captain Tracy's illness—The house described—Owen Massey and his mother—Visit of Norah and Ellen to Widow Massey—The widow gives a history of the O'Harralls.**

"Land! land!" shouted Gerald, who had gone aloft at daybreak to be ready the moment there was light enough to catch eight of the looked-for shores of Ireland. As the sun rose the coast

could be distinguished, indented with numerous deep inlets; but at first it was difficult to see what part of it the ship was approaching. At length, however, Gerald, whose eyes were as sharp as those of any one on board, made out a tall tower standing at the end of a long, low point of land. "Hurrah! I see Hook Tower!" he shouted out; "we're all right!"

"Never made a better land-fall in my life," exclaimed the captain, who had gone up the rigging, and had been examining the coast with his glass. As he spoke, Gerald shouted from the mast-head, "A sail on the larboard bow!"

"What does she look like?" asked the captain, who had returned on deck.

"A ship close-hauled under all sail," answered Gerald; "she's standing this way, and seems to have come out of Dungarvon Bay, as I can see Helvick Head beyond her."

"Whatever she may prove, we shall be well in with Waterford harbour before she can reach us," observed the captain.

"An enemy is not likely to have ventured so close in to the Irish coast, with the risk of encountering a British man-of-war," said Owen.

"Not quite so certain of that," observed the captain; "she may have run in hoping to pick up a few merchant craft and coasters without much trouble, and may have ascertained from other prizes she has taken that there are no men-of-war on the coast. For my part, I would rather be safe up the harbour than have to speak her."

The captain and Owen agreed that at all events it would be unnecessary to keep Lieutenant Vinoy shut up in his cabin. "As he has behaved like a gentleman," said the captain, "go and tell him, Owen, that if he will give his word of honour not to interfere with the other prisoners, I beg that he will come on deck, should he feel so disposed; and that I regret having been under the necessity of confining him to his cabin for so many hours—but, Owen, keep an eye on him, notwithstanding; it may be as well not to trust him too much, and if he were to release that desperate fellow Busson, the two together might play us some trick we shouldn't like."

"No fear of that, sir," answered Owen, glad to show the French lieutenant an act of courtesy, "but I'll keep my eyes about me."

He immediately went below and gave Monsieur Vinoy the captain's message.

"Certainly," answered the lieutenant; "I willingly accept the conditions. I have nothing to complain of—it was the fortune of war; you acted towards me as, under the same circumstances, I should have behaved to you. I will gladly come on deck."

Saying this, he preceded Owen up the companion-ladder, making a polite bow to Norah, who had just before joined her father, and was looking out eagerly towards the land. In a short time the ship could be clearly discerned from the deck. The squareness of her yards and the cut of her canvas made it evident that she was not a merchant vessel; but whether an English or French man-of-war, or a privateer, it was difficult at that distance to determine. She was making good way with the tide, which was then about half flood, running to the eastward; as this was almost across the course of the *Ouzel Galley*, it was rather against than in favour of the latter, whereas it added greatly to the rapid progress of the stranger. Under ordinary circumstances probably neither the captain nor Owen could have had much doubt about the character of the vessel in sight; but having so narrowly escaped the loss of the ship, they both felt more than usually anxious. Every stitch of canvas the *Ouzel Galley* could carry was set on her, the sails being wetted that they might the better hold the wind. The captain kept his glass constantly turned towards the approaching ship. When first seen, she was about twelve miles off, while the *Ouzel Galley* was supposed to be about eight miles from the Hook Tower. At the rate she was going it would take her upwards of an hour to get off it; whereas, should the wind hold, the stranger, with the advantage of the tide, would get her within range of her guns before that time. No flag had as yet been seen flying from her peak; but even should she show British colours it would be no proof that she was not an enemy, as she would be certain to hoist them for the sake of deceiving any merchant vessels she might meet with.

"I very much fear that she is a privateer," observed Owen, after carefully examining the stranger through his glass; "still the wind may fall light and prevent her reaching us—or, better still, shift to the eastward and throw her to leeward, and we may then soon run up the harbour, and got under shelter of Duncannon Fort before she can reach us."

Lieutenant Vinoy had been eagerly gazing at the stranger—a look of perplexity appeared in his face.

"What do you think of yonder ship?" asked Owen.

"I will not disguise my belief from you that she is the *Coquille*," answered the lieutenant. "I know her too well to be mistaken, even at this distance; but remain tranquil—should she recapture your vessel, of which I entertain, I confess, very little doubt, Captain Thurot will treat you with the same courtesy he did before, notwithstanding what has occurred. I am the person he will chiefly blame; and I must beg you to inform him how long I had been on watch and how fatigued I was when I retired to my cabin. Morbleu! to tell you the truth, I am as anxious as you can be to keep out of his way, but don't tell him that I said so."

"You may rest assured that we will do our best to avoid an encounter," answered the captain, "and, should we be recaptured, that we will say all that we can in your favour; but I trust that we shall escape—it would be cruel to be caught after all."

The wind was becoming lighter and lighter, and thus their anxiety was prolonged. Still the *Coquille*—for that such she was very little doubt existed—kept creeping up. The sea became much calmer.

"I will send a boat away with Norah and Gerald; it were better to save her from the annoyance to which she would be exposed should we again fall into the Frenchmen's hands," said Captain Tracy. "I should wish to let you go too, Owen; suffering from your wound, you are but ill able to stand the confinement of a French prison."

"I am grateful to you, captain; and thankfully would I escort your daughter, but she will be safe with her brother, and I cannot bring myself to desert the ship," answered Owen.

"That is like you, Owen," replied the captain; "perhaps I might have said the same were I in your place. It is my principle that every officer should stick to his ship as long as a plank holds together; but we shall have hands enough to take her in, should yonder stranger prove not to be the *Coquille*, but a friend—or should we be recaptured, the fewer people there are on board, the fewer will there be to suffer. I have therefore made up my mind that you shall go. I will send Dan Connor or Pompey, and Tim and Gerald can pull an oar and you can steer; you'll not have more than ten or twelve miles to row before you can get fresh hands, either at Duncannon Fort or at Passage, to take you up to Waterford. See, we are scarcely making three knots an hour; the boat can pull nearly twice as fast as that, and you

will be able to keep well ahead of the enemy. Come, I wanted to see what you would say, but I have resolved you should go; so order the boat to be got ready, and the sooner you are off the better."

Owen was, of course, willing enough to go for the sake of Norah; he had no choice but to obey his commander.

"Norah," said the captain, turning to his daughter, to whom the French officer was endeavouring to make himself agreeable, and who had not heard the conversation between her father and the mate, "go and get your traps together, my girl; I am going to send you and Gerald with the mate on shore, and I hope that we shall be soon after you."

Norah was too well accustomed to obey her father to question the command, and immediately went below.

"Gerald!" shouted the captain to his son, who had some time before come down from the mast-head, "go and help your sister; you must be smart about it—the boat will be in the water in less than five minutes."

In a short time Dan and Tim, who had been sent into the cabin, appeared with Norah's trunks. She quickly followed. Having learned from Gerald the reason of her being sent on shore, she addressed her father. "Oh, father, I must not, I ought not to leave you," she exclaimed; "you think that the *Ouzel Galley* will after all be recaptured, and you will be carried off to France, and perhaps ill-treated by those men from whom you have retaken the ship, while I shall be left."

"Far better that it should be so than that we should both be made prisoners and ill-treated," replied the captain; "so be, as you always have been, an obedient girl—and now, my child, may Heaven bless and protect you!" and the captain, giving his daughter an affectionate kiss, led her to the gangway. The boat was already alongside, and Owen in her ready to help Norah down. She was soon seated in the boat; Gerald followed her. Just then the captain took another glance at the stranger, which was about three miles off; as he did so, the French flag was seen to fly out at her peak. At the same moment the sails of the *Ouzel Galley* gave a loud flap; the captain looked round.

"Praise Heaven! here comes the breeze from the eastward," he exclaimed. "Hold fast with the boat; come on deck again, Norah—we'll not part with you yet;" and, leaning down, he took her arm as she quickly climbed up the side. The rest of the

party followed; and to save time the boat was dropped astern. All hands were busily engaged in bracing up the yards. The *Ouzel Galley* was now well to windward; the French ship tacked, but was still able to steer a course which would bring her within gunshot. The two vessels stood on; the *Ouzel Galley* was rapidly approaching the land, while the *Coquille* was getting further from it. Another tack would, however, place her astern, and it would then be a question whether she could overtake the *Ouzel Galley* before the latter could run up the harbour. Much would depend upon the way the wind blew when she got inside; it might come down the harbour, and in that case the Frenchman might overtake her before she could get up to Credda Head, within which it was not likely even Thurot himself would venture. The breeze held firm; the captain looked over the side.

"The good ship seems to know her danger, and is slipping along famously," he observed to Owen. "We shall be up to Waterford Quay before nightfall, I hope; we have still a good part of the flood, and when Captain Thurot finds that there is no chance of taking us, he'll give up the chase."

"He'll not do so till the last moment, captain," observed Lieutenant Vinoy. "There is no man like him; and should the wind fail us when we are inside the harbour, he will, or I am much mistaken, send in the boats to cut your vessel out."

"We'll hope, then, that the wind will not fail us," answered the captain—and he much doubted whether the Frenchman would venture on so bold an act. "If your friends come, we'll give them a warm reception, and we shall be under the necessity of shutting you up in your cabin again."

"I shall be ready to submit to your orders," said the lieutenant, shrugging his shoulders.

Poor Norah naturally felt very anxious, even though Owen endeavoured to reassure her by pointing out the position of the French ship, which could not tack with advantage till a considerable way astern. The breeze was every moment freshening, and the tall lighthouse on the east side of Waterford harbour became more and more distinct.

"No fear now," cried Gerald at length, as the very beach on it stood, with the water rippling on it, could be clearly discerned, and the harbour up to Duncannon Fort opened out to view. The *Ouzel Galley* was just abreast of Hook Tower when the French ship was seen to tack and boldly to stand after her.



"That looks as if the lieutenant were right in his notion; and should we get becalmed inside, or find the wind drawing down the harbour, Thurot will send in his boats after us," observed Owen to the captain.

"I have no fear of being becalmed till we get inside of Credda Head, and still less of the wind, as it is outside, drawing down the harbour," answered the captain. "Should the boats get up with us, we must try and beat them off; we were not afraid of the ship herself, and those Frenchmen, though brave enough, are not like our own fellows in cutting-out affairs. See to the guns, however, and get ammunition up on deck, for, should they come, we mayn't have much time to spare."

The *Ouzel Galley* stood on in mid-channel; the well-known landmarks, church steeples, country-seats, and castles on either side were recognised; Credda Head, a long, high point at the entrance of the harbour, was neared, when Duncannon Fort came into view. Still the daring privateer followed as if her bold captain did not yet despair of overtaking the chase. The wind, as the captain had hoped it would do, held fair, blowing over the low land on the east side of the harbour; once up with Duncannon Fort the *Ouzel Galley* would be safe, both from the privateer herself and from an attack by her boats. At length Credda Head was rounded.

"Hurrah!" cried Gerald, who, not having to attend to the navigation of the ship, was watching the privateer, "she's afraid of standing on further—she's about; but, hillo!—she has hoisted English colours."

"No proof that she is not French, though," answered the captain; "it is simply to deceive the people on shore."

"At all events, she's standing out of the harbour again, and won't do us any mischief," cried Gerald.

"Thank Heaven!" exclaimed the captain, "we're safe at last." And the long breath he drew clearly showed how anxious he had been.

"A boat coming off from under the Head!" sang out Dan from forward. The topsail sheets were let fly, the courses trailed up to allow the boat to come alongside, and a river pilot stopped on deck.

"Welcome back to Old Ireland!" he exclaimed, as he shook the captain's hand. "Shure, it's a pleasure to see the *Ouzel Galley*

again, for it's long we've been looking for her, and many began to say that she was lost, or taken by the French."

"We very nearly were so, but we managed to take some of these same gentlemen instead," answered the captain with a laugh, to which he could now give vent; "and only just now we had a narrow squeak for it. What do you think of yonder ship, Pat?"

"Of course, she's an English man-of-war," answered the pilot; "we've been expecting one in here for some days past, and we thought that craft was her. To say the truth, we were going on board her; for, shure, the *Ouzel Galley* knows her way up to George's Quay by herself."

"Had you done so, Pat, you'd have been carried off, and made to serve as pilot on board a French ship till the end of the war," answered Captain Tracy.

"Maybe you're right, captain; but see, she carries the English flag, and no Frenchman would have the impudence to come into our harbour," said the pilot.

"That gentleman says she is French, and he ought to know, for he belonged to her," observed the captain, pointing to Lieutenant Vinoy. Pat Monaghan, however, was not convinced; though, as the stranger was rapidly running out of the harbour again, he had no opportunity of ascertaining for himself. Under Pat's pilotage the *Ouzel Galley* stood on up the harbour, which now narrowed considerably. At length she rounded Cheek Point, when with a fair wind she ran up the Suir, on the south bank of which Waterford is situated. It was late in the evening when at last she dropped her anchor off George's Quay. Before her canvas was furled, Mr Ferris, the senior partner of her owners, Ferris, Twigg, and Cash, came on board, and warmly congratulated the captain on his safe return. On hearing of the gallant way in which possession of the *Ouzel Galley* had been regained, Mr Ferris invited Norah and Gerald to his house.

"My daughter Ellen will be delighted to see her old schoolfellow, Miss Tracy, who was a great favourite of hers," he said; "and many of my friends will be glad to see your son, who from your account was the principal actor in your adventure."

"I must not praise Gerald too much," said Captain Tracy, after he had accepted the invitation; "my mate, Owen Massey, was the chief concoctor of the plot, and had I not a high opinion of

his judgment and courage, I should not have ventured to give my consent to it."

Before leaving the ship, Captain Tracy was anxious to be relieved of his prisoners. Mr Ferris hurried back to the chief magistrate of the town, who at once sent down a guard to march them off to the jail. The lieutenant, however, on being brought before him, was more courteously treated, and on giving his parole not to leave the town or to communicate with the enemy, he was allowed to be at large. As soon as he was set at liberty he received an invitation from Mr Ferris to take up his abode at his house in King Street.

Thankful indeed was Owen Massey when, the prisoners having been carried off, he was able to give up charge of the ship and go on shore. He had a home to go to, though an humble one, with his mother, who resided in a pretty little cottage in the outskirts of the town. She had seen better days, for both she and her husband were of ancient lineage; but he had been engaged in a long-protracted lawsuit, which he ultimately lost, and died, leaving her very limited means with which to support herself and their only child Owen. Captain Tracy, an old friend, offered to take Owen to sea; and the lad was delighted with the thoughts of the life in prospect. His mother had not only given him the best education the place afforded, but had sent him to Trinity College, Dublin, to complete his education. Here his means, however, did not allow him to remain long; but, being clever and diligent, he was better prepared than most lads were at that time for his future calling. He knew nothing about the Royal Navy, or he would certainly have desired to enter it, which he might easily have done had he possessed any friend able to get him placed on the deck of a man-of-war. He had, like other youths, read accounts of the voyages of the old explorers, of the adventures of the buccaneers, and other works; he was scarcely aware of the difference which then existed between the officers of the Royal Navy and merchant service. Captain Tracy, though anxious to promote his interests, did not think fit to enlighten him, as he fully believed that during the "piping times of peace" he would be far more likely to succeed in the latter than in the former service; and belonging to it himself, he rightly looked upon it as an honourable one.

Mrs Massey was struck by her son's pale face and languid manner. The voyage over, the effects of his severe wound, and the long-continued anxiety he had suffered, at once told on him. She immediately sent for the best surgeon in the place. Dr

Roach quickly arrived; he had a great respect for Widow Massey, and had known Owen, from his boyhood. On examining his wound he put on a grave face.

"It surprises me, my dear boy, that you could have managed to move about with so fearful a laceration," he said; "it has been well and carefully dressed, I will allow, or you would not have been alive at this moment. Many a poor fellow has died from a less hurt than this. However, you will do well now, if you follow my directions; but you must lie by and get your mother to nurse you. Come, turn into bed at once; you are not fit to be about—you'll get well the sooner."

Owen expostulated; he had been on his legs for several days, and why should he now lie by? he asked.

"For the very reason that you have done more than you have strength for," answered the doctor.

"But the duty of the ship must be attended to, and I am anxious to see my captain," urged Owen.

"And your captain's daughter, eh, my young friend—is it not so?" said Dr Roach. "Well, I will let her know your wishes; I have been called in to attend on Captain Tracy, who requires some doctoring, though not as much as you do—and as to the ship, there are others whose duty it is to look after her; it was yours to bring her safely into port, and you did that in a very gallant way, I hear. Now, Mrs Massey, I lay my commands on your son to remain quietly in bed till I tell him to get up; if he disobeys me, we shall be having a stiff arm or something worse, so he is warned. I will come and see him regularly, and you'll give him the medicines as I direct;" and Dr Roach, kindly shaking the widow's hand, walked away towards the town, with his gold-headed cane pressed to his lips—a sure sign that he was lost in thought.

Captain Tracy was, as the doctor had said, really ill; he was even worse than it was at first supposed, and required all Norah's attention. Though much wishing to see Owen and Mrs Massey, she could not venture to leave him. Gerald, however, willingly undertook to pay a visit to the mate, who not being positively prohibited from seeing visitors, Gerald was admitted. Owen more clearly understood the message which Norah had sent than Gerald did himself. Though longing to see her, he acknowledged that it was her duty to remain with her father.

"However, Owen, you need not be in a hurry to get well," said Gerald, "for the *Ouzel Galley* won't be fit for sea again for many months; she suffered so much during her last voyage, and got so knocked about by the enemy's shot, that she is to undergo a thorough repair. My father, not wishing me to be idle, talks of sending me to sea in some other craft—if I have my choice, I would go on board a man-of-war, where I might have plenty of opportunities of fighting the enemies of our country. I don't like the idea of sailing in a ship which may be attacked and captured by any French privateer we might fall in with."

"I am sorry to hear you say that, Gerald, for I had hoped to have you with me when I next go afloat;" answered Owen. "To my mind, the merchant service is as honourable as that of the Royal Navy, if a man does his duty. I am very sure that God did not design men to be fighting animals; it was Satan, and no one else, who put it into their heads that it is a fine and noble thing to attack and kill each other."

"Why, Owen, I always thought you a brave fellow, and as fond of fighting as any man," exclaimed Gerald.

"I grant you that I am ready to fight in defence of the life and liberty of my shipmates and the property committed to my charge, because I can see that to be my duty," answered Owen. "The merchant service affords ample opportunity for the exercise of a man's courage and determination. Though I respect the officers and men of the Royal Navy, who are engaged in fighting for their king and country, I have a very different opinion of privateersmen, who go forth to plunder the harmless merchantmen of other nations merely for the sake of enriching themselves. It may be necessary to destroy the commerce of the enemy for the purpose of crippling their means of offence; but privateersmen seldom trouble their heads about that—they are incited by the instinct of pirates, and plunder is their sole object. Whatever you do, let me urge you, Gerald, never to turn privateersman; if you were to consult your father, he would, I know, say as I do, for we have often spoken about the matter."

"I dare say you are right, Owen," answered Gerald. "If the *Ouzel Galley* were going at once to sea I would gladly sail in her. The owners, as I heard from my father, intend to give the command of her to you."

"I am thankful to him, and very happy to hear it," said Owen; "and I hope, Gerald, that if you go afloat in the mean time, which it is very right you should do, that you will be back soon

enough to join me. Tell your father that I will try to get well as fast as I can, that I may attend to fitting out the *Ouzel Galley*."

Gerald did not give a very favourable report of Owen Massey; he described him as looking pale and ill, and dreadfully out of spirits, quite unlike himself. It made poor Norah exceedingly anxious; she had bestowed on him her heart's best affections, with the full sanction of her father, who highly esteemed him.

To give Gerald employment till arrangements could be made for his going to sea, he was sent on board the *Ouzel Galley*, to assist in landing her stores and unrigging her, previous to her being hauled up on the slip to be repaired.

A few days on shore had so far restored Captain Tracy's health that Norah was able to pay her promised visit to Mrs Massey, and Ellen Ferris offered to accompany her. They set off together. Ellen was nearly a year older than Norah; both were remarkable for their beauty. Ellen was somewhat taller and slighter than her friend, with dark brown hair and clear complexion, and fine, sparkling eyes; many persons would have admired her the most. Having mixed in good society in Dublin, she had more the manners of the world than Norah, though in reality equally artless and unsophisticated; while she was able to take her part in conversation on any of the topics of the day, of which, naturally, Norah knew but little. She was amiable, lively, and right-principled, and altogether allowed to be a very charming girl, the pride of her father, who had no other child. She was therefore, of course, looked upon as an heiress; she did not, however, give herself any airs, but was thoroughly unaffected, her aim simply being properly to do the honours of her father's house. Their chief residence was in Dublin, but she was always his companion when he came to his house at Waterford. It was a pleasant place, a *rus in urbe*, as the worthy merchant delighted to call it. The house itself, a large, well-built mansion, with nothing remarkable about it, faced the street. On the other side was an extensive piece of ground. Immediately behind the house it was level, and laid out with a lawn and flower-beds. Beyond this a hill rose to a considerable height, the hillside being cut into slopes and terrace-walks, with an artificial canal fed by an ever-flowing stream at the bottom of it. In accordance with the taste of the day, these terraces were ornamented with statues; and at one end was a fine arch, part of the ruin of an ancient Gothic chapel. At the other end was an aviary filled with numerous feathered songsters, several species of gay plumage. Further round the hill was an enclosure stocked with various kinds of deer, and a white doe, an especial

favourite of the fair mistress of the garden. Besides the canal, at the foot of the hill were two large reservoirs for the purpose of supplying it with water, containing carp and tench and other fish; and at the summit of the hill stood an obelisk to the memory of King William, whom the owner held in especial reverence. The views from the hill of the city on one side, and of the rough rocks and wild uncultivated hills on the opposite side, of the river, the shipping at anchor, with vessels and boats decked with gay flags constantly moving up and down the stream, were picturesque and attractive, and afforded an object of interest to the numerous guests whom the hospitable owner was wont to entertain at his house. The place was laid out more according to Dutch than English taste, and of course was especially admired by the natives of Holland, among whom the firm of Ferris, Twigg, and Cash had extensive connections, as well as with the West Indies, to which part of the world they chiefly traded. The *Ouzel Galley* was only one of the numerous vessels owned by the firm, and all being strongly built, well found, and well officered, with sufficient crews, they made successful voyages. Mr Ferris himself was a dignified, good-looking, and somewhat portly gentleman, frank and hearty in his manners, fond of a good joke and a good story, and highly respected for his upright and liberal conduct.

Ellen, of course, had many admirers, but as yet it was generally believed that she had favoured no one. She was, in truth, the light of her father's home, and he had no wish to part with her. She and Norah set off one bright afternoon on their walk to Widow Massey's cottage. Norah had confided to Ellen her engagement to Owen.

"I am young, and so is he, and we are to wait till he has made two or three more voyages, while I am to keep house for my father, who does not intend again to go to sea," she remarked. "He inherited some property lately, which prevents the necessity of his doing so, and though I enjoyed the voyage to the West Indies, and the beautiful scenery and strange sights I saw there, I am very glad to have him remain at home, especially since the war has broken out, and there is now the risk of capture by an enemy, such as we so narrowly escaped from. I wish, indeed, that Owen could give up the sea, but he is very fond of it, and promises me not to run into more danger than can be helped; and as it is the lot of so many poor women to have those they love at sea, I must not complain."

Ellen, sighed. Norah looked up with an inquiring glance at her countenance, but Ellen only observed, "It must be borne with

patience; and then, you know, you can pray for those you love, and that is a great comfort."

Mrs Massey, who had from her front windows seen her visitors approaching, opened the door to admit them. She welcomed Norah with an affectionate embrace, putting back her hair to kiss her fair brow.

"I beg your pardon, Miss Ferris," she said, "for neglecting you; but you will excuse me—it is so long since I have seen this dear girl, and I so rejoice to have her back in safety. My son Owen, the doctor says, owes his life to the careful way she dressed his wounds." She continued, after her guests were seated, "He will be wishing to come down and see you, Norah, and I cannot forbid him, though he is not fit to present himself before Miss Ferris."

"Do not let me prevent Mr Massey from coming down," said Ellen, rising, and giving a smile to Norah; "I will go out and take a look at your pretty garden, Mrs Massey, and you shall show me the flowers."

Norah felt grateful for the tact of her friend, and the widow having gone upstairs to tell Owen that he need not fear the meeting with a stranger, she returned and took Ellen into her garden, which contained a shrubbery, a lawn and flower-beds, and an arbour with a view of the river and shipping in the distance, and invited them to sit down.

"This is a very pretty spot, Mrs Massey," said Ellen. "Now you have got your son back, you must be perfectly happy."

"I ought to be so, my dear young lady, and am indeed thankful to have him with me," answered the widow; "but recollections of the past will intrude. I cannot help thinking how different would have been his lot had he not been unjustly deprived of his inheritance; and little good has it done those who got it. Wealth gained by fraud or violence never benefits the possessors."

The widow, who spent much of her time in solitude, was inclined to talk when she found a willing listener. Ellen's looks betokened sympathy, for she was aware of the wrongs the Massey family had endured.

"The O'Harralls were ever a lawless race," continued Mrs Massey; "they were leaders among the Rapparees in Cromwell's and James's times, and lived by robbing their countrymen and



neighbours, till William of Orange established a firm government. They then exercised their cunning by means of the law, and, supported by the Evil One, their frauds were successful. Scarcely, however, had they gained possession of Tramore Castle and its broad lands than they took to their wicked courses. Denis O'Harrall set all the laws of God and man at defiance; yet, as he kept open house and entertained guests of high and low degree, he was universally popular till he had been brought to the verge of ruin. Such a father could not fail to bring up his sons ill: his eldest son was as extravagant and reckless as himself. Brian, his second, had more talent than his brother. Having been sent to college in Dublin, he at first gave some promise of turning out well. Owen was at that time acquainted with him, and, harbouring no ill-feeling, was ready to be on friendly terms; but Brian soon showed the cloven foot, and although he remained for some time, he was at length dismissed with ignominy. Living near the sea, he had been accustomed from his earliest days to go out with the fishermen, and to make short trips to Drogheda, Dungarvon, Youghal, and occasionally even further. After his return home, having no means of indulging in the bad courses to which he was addicted, he, it was said, joined a band of smugglers, who under his leadership became the most daring and successful of all the gangs of desperate men who carry on their illicit trade across the English Channel. Now they appeared in one part of the coast, now in another; so that, although a constant watch was kept for them, owing to the vigilance of their agents for several years, they never failed to escape the king's cruisers. From long impunity becoming less cautious, a valuable cargo in which he had ventured all his property was captured, with himself and several of his companions, by a king's ship. They were brought into Waterford, and were imprisoned in Reginald's Tower, on the quay. During the night, however, they rose on the guard, whom they killed, to prevent alarm being given, and stealing a boat made their way down the river. In the harbour they found a Dutch ship, the *Saint Peter*, of Hamburg, which had put in from stress of weather. As she was on the point of sailing, they pretended that they had come down on purpose to take a passage on board her to Dantzic, for which port she was bound. The captain, believing their story, willingly received them, as they offered to pay a considerable sum for their passage-money. Scarcely, however, had they got out of sight of land than they set upon the captain and his officers and killed them all, and so overawed the men that no one dared to offer the slightest resistance. By threats and promises they induced the greater number to join them, and those who would not do so were thrown overboard. One, however, a good swimmer,

recovering from the blows which had apparently killed him, got hold of a grating and was picked up the next morning. Being carried into Cork harbour, he gave information of what had occurred, and the authorities in all places along the coast were informed that they might seize the pirates should they appear. Their intention was to proceed up the British Channel, to plunder any vessel they could fall in with, and afterwards, when they had completed their cargo, to sell it and the ship. A violent north-easterly gale, however, drove them far away to the westward, and it was not till many days were over that they were again able to stand to the eastward. They had, as it happened, from not taking proper observations, got out of their reckoning; while steering, as they thought, up the Channel, they found themselves close in with the Irish coast. By this time being short of water and provisions, they ran into Dunmanus Bay, supposing that, no one suspecting their character, they might remain as long as was necessary to repair damages and to procure whatever they wanted. Among the crew was a young black, whose life had been spared under the idea that he was too stupid and ignorant to think of betraying them. As he appeared to be perfectly contented on board, he was allowed to be at liberty; but he was in reality a remarkably sharp lad, and only waited his opportunity to get on shore. One night, after the ship had been there two or three days, he managed to slip overboard, and, getting safely to land, made his way to Dunbeacon Castle, at the head of the harbour. He here described what had occurred, and it was at once guessed that the vessel in the bay was the one for which the authorities had been directed to be on the watch. A despatch was immediately sent off to Bantry; before the morning a party of soldiers arrived, and, procuring boats, boarded the ship and captured all found in her. The ringleader, however, Brian O'Harrall, was on shore, and though strict search was made for him he was nowhere to be discovered. He had friends in the neighbourhood, and it was only sufficient for them to know that the officers of justice were after him to induce them to assist in his escape. My son happened to be in Bantry at the time, just before he went to sea; to save the boy, who was carried there, from the vengeance of O'Harrall, he took him back to Waterford, and Captain Tracy received him on board the *Ouzel Galley*. It was from Pompey I heard all the particulars I have narrated. The five other men on board the *Saint Peter* were tried and condemned to death, and after their execution their heads were set up at Waterford, Youghal, Cork, Kinsale, and Blantyre. The ship and cargo being restored to the owners, O'Harrall was outlawed, and a price set on his head; but though, from time to time, he was heard of in connection with various desperate acts,

he never failed to escape the grasp of justice. It was supposed that he at length joined a band of smugglers, though he has not for a year or more been heard of. He has, I should have said, a younger brother remarkably like him in character and appearance, who greatly assisted in his escape. This brother, Michael, made his appearance now in one part of the country, now in another, letting it be supposed that he was Brian; thus distracting the attention of those in search of the culprit. He is himself, from what I have heard, fully as determined a ruffian as Brian, and has long followed the same lawless pursuits."

"What a fearful character!" exclaimed Ellen, shuddering; "and yet you say that Brian was at one time at college, mixing with young men of education and refinement."

"Yes, and, with the talents and advantages he possessed, might have gained an honourable position in the county," replied Mrs Massey; "for, his elder brother having no children, he would probably have succeeded to the estate. I should have been more reconciled to the loss of Tramore had it been in possession of honourable people, who would have attended to the property and watched over the interests of the tenantry; and it is sad to see the place going to ruin, and the unfortunate people who might look up to the owner for assistance becoming every day more degraded and wretched."

"But perhaps, Mrs Massey, if the present owner should die, and as the wretched men you have been describing cannot succeed, you, or rather your son, may recover the property," observed Ellen.

"I fear not," answered the widow, with a sigh. "I do not understand legal matters, but the youngest brother might, I fancy, succeed in spite of his crimes, and without ample pecuniary means I believe that it would be impossible to regain the estate. I have long been reconciled to my lot, though I should be thankful could Owen avoid the necessity of going to sea, and enjoy a sufficient fortune to enable him to marry our dear Norah in the course of a year or two."

"Now you have told me the particulars of this strange history, I shall not despair of success," said Ellen. "The want of money must, at all events, not be a hindrance; there are, I am sure, those who would be ready to assist your son."

Ellen sat on, readily listening to all the widow's conversation; for, heartily sympathising with Norah, she was in no hurry to break in upon her and Owen's *tête-à-tête*. However, the length

of the shadows stretching across the lawn at last warned her that the evening was approaching, and she remembered that it would be disagreeable, if not dangerous, to be compelled to walk home in the dark. Norah, however, had not noted how time had gone by; but when she looked out of the window and saw that the sun was on the point of setting, she expressed her readiness to return home without delay. Ellen, wishing Mr Massey good-bye, and hoping that he would soon recover, hurried to the door, leaving Norah, who was putting on her cloak and hat, to follow and pay her parting adieux in the way she might think proper. Had Owen not been absolutely forbidden, in spite of his weakness he would have accompanied them—though Ellen laughed at the idea of there being any cause for apprehending danger during the short walk into the town.

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## **Chapter Five.**

**Arrival of a Jersey privateer—An invitation sent to the officers—Norah and Ellen meet a stranger on their walk home—Attempt to carry off Norah—She is rescued—Fruitless search for the ruffians—Arrival of the captain and lieutenants of the privateer—The merchant's house and grounds—A banquet—Captain Dupin requests the pleasure of a visit from his Waterford friends—A dance on board the privateer—An unpleasant surprise.**

Just after the young ladies had set off on their walk to visit Mrs Massey, a Dungarvon hooker arrived at the quay, and her skipper brought the intelligence that a sloop of war had anchored that morning in the mouth of the harbour. She carried eighteen guns, for he had counted nine on a side; having boarded her to dispose of some of his fish, he was sure that he could not be mistaken. When he was more than half-way up the river, he added, the wind being light, a gig had passed him; but though he looked everywhere, he had not again seen her. He believed that she belonged to the sloop, as an officer was seated in the stern, and she had the appearance of a man-of-war's boat; but of that he could not be certain.

Mr Ferris had invited a party to dinner, and as he always wished to pay attention to naval officers, he immediately despatched a letter by a fast rowing-boat, requesting the company of the commander and officers of the sloop at the intended banquet.

Mr Ferris received a letter in reply, signed "Jean Dupin, commander of the *Orestes*, private ship of war," observing that Mr Ferris had been misinformed as to the character of the vessel he had the honour to command, she not being a king's ship, but belonging to Jersey, and the property of a firm with which he was probably well acquainted, Messrs Saint Croix and Cie; and he was unwilling to sail under false colours—but that if Mr Ferris still desired his company, he and his officers would have infinite pleasure in availing themselves of his hospitable invitation. Mr Ferris immediately sent back the boat, assuring Captain Dupin that it would afford him the greatest possible satisfaction to receive him, and any of his lieutenants and junior officers who might be able to accompany him.

"Ellen will be disappointed when she finds that the ship is not a man-of-war," he said to himself. "She takes much interest in the navy; she saw a good specimen of the naval officer in that gentlemanly and pleasing young lieutenant, Norman Foley, who was occasionally at our house in Dublin when his ship lay off Kingstown, and she has consequently an idea that all naval officers are like him. However, many of the Jersey privateers are commanded and officered by gentlemen of good family in the island, and I doubt not that Captain Dupin will prove an agreeable addition to our party. I wish that Captain Tracy were well enough to be present; he and Captain Dupin might find that they were old acquaintances, and would, at all events, have many subjects in common to talk about."

We must now return to Norah and Ellen. They hastened their steps, for the sun had set, and darkness was stealing over the landscape, and unless they hurried on they would scarcely have light sufficient to see their way through the narrow and dimly illuminated street, and might perhaps meet with drunken men who would cause them annoyance.

"I am pretty well known here, so that it is not likely any one will insult us; but it would be unpleasant to encounter strangers," said Ellen. "I am very sorry, Norah, for it was my fault remaining so long listening to Mrs Massey's dreadful accounts of the O'Harrall family. I was much interested, and I have taken it into my head that Mr Massey may be able to regain his ancestral property. You know I am somewhat romantic, and I should be so delighted to see you mistress of Tramore Castle."

"I am afraid there is very little hope of that," said Norah; "nor am I ambitious, but shall be content to enjoy with my dear Owen the limited fortune we shall be able to muster."

They had just reached the most secluded part of the road, when they heard footsteps behind them; and Norah, looking round, saw a man following, his figure shrouded in a Spanish cloak, a broad-brimmed hat ornamented with a feather drawn down over his brow, partly concealing his countenance. The end of a scabbard which appeared beneath his cloak showed that he was a gentleman, while his firm though hurried step gave proof of what was of still more consequence, that he was perfectly sober. As he passed them he lifted his hat, an act which served rather to conceal further than to show his features. After going on a short distance he stopped; then, facing about, walked rapidly towards them.

"Miss Tracy," he exclaimed, "I have been impelled by an irresistible power to endeavour to see you, and I am more fortunate than I expected. Will your fair friend favour me by going on a few paces before us, while I speak what I wish to reach no other ear but yours?"

"Who is this gentleman?" exclaimed Ellen. "Is it your wish that I should do as he requests?"

"Oh no, no! do not leave me on any account," whispered Norah, tightly grasping Ellen's arm. "Surely you must be under a mistake, sir, and take me for some one else," she continued, turning to the stranger.

"Miss Tracy, your features, your voice, your figure, are all too indelibly impressed upon my mind," he replied. "Do not you remember the last words I spoke to you ere we parted?"

Norah, on hearing this, was still more convinced than at first that the stranger was under a mistake. And yet the stranger had addressed her by name! Could he be out of his senses?

"Know you not that you have inspired the deepest and most devoted affection, which death alone can destroy?" he continued. "To meet you again I have gone through difficulties and dangers which would otherwise have appeared insuperable; and can you be so cold-hearted as to regard with indifference a love so ardent and true?"

His voice as he spoke had more of a tone of anger than affection in it.

"I must not listen to such language as this," answered Norah, the idea of who the person was now flashing across her mind; "I

beg that you will not stop my friend and me, as we are anxious to return home without delay."

"I must and will be heard," exclaimed the stranger, attempting to grasp Norah's hand. "Come with me; I offer you a heart which loves you to desperation, and mine you must be. I have the means of enforcing my request—if your friend interferes, she must take the consequences, and will be compelled to accompany you."

"You are mad, sir, to suppose for a moment that I would consent to such a proposal; let me and my friend go, I entreat you."

"For your refusal I was prepared," exclaimed the stranger, "but it will not avail you;" and putting a silver whistle to his mouth, he blew it shrilly. It was answered from a distance, and Ellen, looking in the direction from which the sound came, saw two mounted men, each with a led horse, approaching. Ellen now gave way to her fears, and uttered loud shrieks for help. Norah felt all her energies paralysed by the threatened act of violence, and could only cling to Ellen's arm and murmur, "Don't leave me! don't leave me!"

A wall rather too high to be leaped over intervened between them and the horsemen. They had to make a circuit to reach a gate which opened into the road before they gained it. The rattle of wheels was heard, and loud shouts of laughter between snatches of song. Just then Ellen saw a line of cars, the horses at full speed, coming along the road; the stranger saw them too, and seizing Norah round the waist, endeavoured to drag her to the wall; but Ellen and she clung frantically to each other, Ellen again and again shrieking loudly for help. On came the cars; some men in seamen's dresses sprang from the first, one of them shouting out, "Shure, it's the young mistress! Be alive, and dale smartly with the outrageous thief of the world who's dared to lay hands on her;" and, joined by a dozen or more men from the other cars, armed with stout shillelaghs, Dan Connor dashed forward at headlong speed. The stranger glanced round to see how far off their horses still were from him, and finding that they had not yet passed through the gate, and that all hope of carrying off Norah must be abandoned, vaulted over the wall and ran towards them. His companions, seeing what had occurred, hurried up to his assistance. Just as the party of seamen had got close upon his heels, he threw himself upon one of the led horses and galloped off, followed by the shouts and execrations of the seamen, who were, fortunately for him, without firearms.

"Shure, Miss Norah, jewel, you're all safe now, and that mighty big blackguard, whoever he may be, will do you no harm," exclaimed Dan. "If you and the young lady will just mount on the car, we'll escort you safe into Waterford; and if he and a score of Rapparees like himself were to come back, we'd bate them all off before they could come near you."

"Let us get up on the car, as the sailor advises us," said Ellen; and she mounted and helped Norah up, when the seamen running on each side, they set off at a brisk pace, followed by the other cars.

"It's at the wake of poor Pat Casey we've been, Miss Norah. He niver was himself after the wound he got when we fought the privateer—and shure, we were coming home at daybreak; but somehow or other, what with the potheen, and the friends we met, and a scrimmage or two, we made a long morning of it; and bedad, good luck it was, or we wouldn't have come up in time to put that fellow to flight."

Ellen, who had somewhat recovered from her alarm, assured Dan how thankful she felt to him and his shipmates and friends for the service they had rendered Norah and herself.

"Service, Misthress Ferris! it was the greatest pleasure I've had since I was born, and I only wish I'd the same every day of my life. What would Mr Massey have been after doing if that thundering villain had got you and Miss Norah upon his horses and galloped off through the country wid ye!—but he'd betther not be showing his face again in these parts, whoever he is," answered Dan. "As soon as we've seen you both safe home, we'll go in chase of him, and it will be hard if we don't catch him, too."

Norah did not say whom she suspected the ruffian to be who had attempted the outrage; indeed, she was far too nervous to speak, and it was not till, escorted by Dan and his friends, they arrived safely at home, that she mentioned her suspicions to Ellen. She begged her to make as light as possible of the matter, for fear of agitating Captain Tracy in a way which might be injurious to him in his present state of health. Still, the circumstance could not be altogether concealed from him. Abduction was at that time too common in Ireland for what had occurred to create much surprise. The only difficulty was to ascertain who the man could be, though it was generally believed that his intention was to carry off Miss Ferris, who was known to be an heiress. At that time there actually existed in the neighbourhood an association known as the Abduction Club,



all the members of which had sworn to assist each other in carrying off such young ladies as either of them fixed upon. By means of their spies, they made themselves acquainted with the fortunes of every marriageable girl and the domestic arrangements of the family. Sometimes, when she had not been claimed by any particular member, they drew lots to whom she should belong, and the rest were then bound to assist the fortunate winner. No class of society, from the highest to the opulent farmer or tradesman, was exempt from the depredations of the associates. They themselves were mostly the younger sons or relations of families of some standing, who, looking upon commerce as beneath them, with too little education to succeed in the learned professions, if they could not obtain a commission in the army, spent their lives in idleness, and were known as squireens. Generally being able to borrow good horses from their rich friends, they rode about the country habited in red waistcoats lined with narrow gold or silver lace or fur, tight leather breeches, and top-boots; making themselves conspicuous at fairs, markets, races, and assizes, and in other places where people congregated. They excelled in athletic sports, especially in the game of hurling, when they took the lead among the young men of the peasant class who engaged in it, and thus became identified with them, and could on all occasions rely on their support. Though the crime of abduction was punishable with death, as the girls who were thus carried off were in most instances immediately married, few were found willing to prosecute their husbands. The law was consequently almost inoperative, and the abominable practice up to this day had continued unchecked.

Mr Ferris was of course highly indignant. He at once took steps to discover the offender, though, as he had not succeeded in his attempt, there was little probability that he would be captured, or if so, punished. The annoyance, also, to which his daughter and her friend must in future be subjected, from being unable to venture outside the garden without a strong guard, was provoking in the extreme; still, the daring characters of the men who were known to be combined for the purpose rendered it unsafe for the young ladies to go abroad unless thus protected.

Dan and Pompey, with the other seamen of the *Ouzel Galley*, and several friends who joined them, as soon as they had left Norah and Ellen safe at home, set off in chase of the ruffians, armed with such weapons as they could hastily obtain, in addition to the shillelaghs they had before possessed. Following in the direction they had seen the horsemen going, they made their way over all impediments, inquiring of every one they met,

and hoping by perseverance to overtake them. They learnt, however, after proceeding a considerable distance, that the men had separated, one going off with the led horses in the direction of the mountains to the westward, another turning southward towards Tramore Bay, while the third followed a road which would conduct him to Passage, near the mouth of the river, whence he could cross into Wexford. The parties accordingly divided, but had not gone far when they lost all trace of the fugitives, and as Dan observed, "They might as well be looking for a needle in a bottle of hay, as hope to find the spalpeen." Late at night they returned to Kingscourt House, the residence of Mr Ferris, to report the ill-success of their expedition.

"Bedad, your honour, we'll be after keeping a sharp look-out on the fellows, and if any one of them shows his ugly face in the neighbourhood, we'll be down upon him as quick as lightning," said Dan.

"But if you don't know the men—and from what I understand, you only saw their backs in the gloom—you will find a considerable difficulty in recognising them," observed Mr Ferris, "and may chance to lay hands on the wrong persons."

"Shure, your honour, we'll ask them if they're the right ones before we give them a taste of the shillelagh," answered Dan.

"At all events, Connor, I wish you, and a dozen stout fellows you may pick out, to act as a guard at my house, to protect my daughter and her friend, should any yet more daring attempt be made to carry them off," replied Mr Ferris.

"I'll do that same with all the pleasure in life," answered Dan, "though it may be a hard matter to keep our eyes open to-night, seeing we were waking Pat Casey till a late hour this morning, and then, after seeing him laid dacently under the turf, had to drink long life and success to his sperrit and a short stay in purgatory, where the praste told us he had gone—though, being a kind-hearted man, he'd do his best to pray him out of it."

"I have no fear of any fresh attempt being made to-night, so you may all sleep soundly in your beds," said Mr Ferris; "but I shall require you to-morrow, and for some time to come after that, while I remain at Waterford."

In those days the dinner-hour, even in the houses of the opulent, was at two o'clock, and some time before that two well-manned boats, from the stern of which floated the British

ensign, reached the quay at Waterford. Only three officers, however, stepped on shore, the captain and two others, whom he introduced as his lieutenants to Mr Ferris, who went down to meet him. All were dressed in uniforms closely resembling that of the British navy, for such privateersmen were wont to wear. Captain Dupin, who spoke with a slight French accent, as most Jersey men did at that period, was a fair, good-looking young man, with a somewhat short though well-knit figure, his countenance betokening courage and determination. His first lieutenant, whom he introduced as Mr Macarthy, was a man of a very different mould. His well-bronzed features were concealed by a large beard and moustache, while a black patch over one eye, and another down his cheek, showing that he had suffered in the fight, did not add to the attractiveness of his appearance.

"As he is a countryman of yours, he was anxious to avail himself of your invitation, though scarcely recovered from wounds he received in our last action with a French ship, which we captured after a determined resistance," observed the captain. "He was shot through the mouth, which considerably impedes his speech; but he will be able notwithstanding to do justice to your good fare, as I have no doubt you will perceive."

Mr Macarthy shook hands with Mr Ferris, and expressed his satisfaction at finding himself once more on his native soil.

"It is many a long year since I left the old country, and from that time till I landed a few months ago in Jersey I have been knocking about in distant seas," said the lieutenant. "Although Ballyadare, in Sligo, is my native place, I have more than once in my younger days visited Waterford, and this is not the first time I have been on shore at your beautiful town. Faith, sir, it is a place to boast of; so fine a river, such magnificent quays, and that old tower I see there—I forget its name—where will you find the like?"

Mr Ferris, pleased with the compliment paid to his city, was ready to overlook the somewhat rough manner and exterior of his guest.

"Indeed, sir," he said, "we are apt to boast of our virgin city and its quays, a mile long as you will perceive, at which sixty sail of vessels can unload at a time; of our dry dock, lately built by our townsman Mr Congreve; of our conduits, which supply both our houses and the shipping with water; of the privileges enjoyed by our citizens; and of our militia, mustering five hundred men, and capable of giving a good account of any enemy who may

dare to invade our shores. You will, I hope, meet some of the officers at dinner to-day."

"By my soul, it is a city you may well be proud of," answered the lieutenant; "and it is to be hoped that no enemy for their own sakes will ever venture within gunshot of your redoubtable militia."

The second lieutenant was introduced as a young Jersey man, Mr Latrobe. He spoke with more French accent than his chief, who accounted for his so doing by remarking that he had not come to sea till he was nearly grown up, and had during peace time served on board a French merchant vessel. "We Jersey men," he added, "though our sympathies are thoroughly English, yet retain, as you know, the language and customs of our Breton ancestors."

"Come, gentlemen, I must conduct you to my humble residence," said Mr Ferris, and, leading his guests up Hanover Street, so called by the loyal inhabitants in compliment to the reigning royal family, they entered King Street, towards the west end of which was situated Mr Ferris's house, overlooking the river. On reaching the house, as there was time to spare, Mr Ferris took them round his grounds, of which they were loud in their compliments. So pleased did they declare themselves that they begged to go round them a second time, when the lieutenant might have been seen narrowly observing the localities. As they paced round the outer circuit on their walk, they met Ellen and Norah, to whom of course Mr Ferris introduced his guests. The officers bowed, and Captain Dupin, addressing Ellen, expressed his admiration of her beautiful garden and the taste with which it was laid out.

"Surely I need not inquire whether you were the chief designer of these lovely terraces and sparkling fountains, and that picturesque rockwork," said the captain, bowing as he spoke.

"No, I can claim no merit for the beauties you admire," answered Ellen; "my father purchased the property from the former owner. I should have liked it better had it been left more to nature."

"Ah, if you could see Jersey! How you would delight in my own native island!" exclaimed Captain Dupin; "it contains just the scenery you would appreciate."

"I can assure you that in Ireland we have most romantic and beautiful scenery," answered Ellen; "and in the county of Kerry

are the lovely Lakes of Killarney, such as I believe all strangers consider the most romantic in the world."

"Ah, I know nothing of Ireland, though I may hope some day to be better acquainted with it," said the captain.

The other two stood aloof, as if they did not consider themselves of sufficient consequence to address the young ladies to whom their commander was speaking. Ellen, offering to show Captain Dupin the aviary, led the way along the terrace. Norah followed by herself, leaving the two lieutenants in conversation with Mr Ferris. The elder of the two after a little time stepped forward, and Norah, looking round, found him walking by her side.

"Is this spot as attractive as some of the scenes you have visited in the West Indies, Miss Tracy?" he asked, speaking low.

Norah started as she heard the voice; but looking at the speaker, whose countenance she failed to recognise, she asked, "How do you know that I have been in the West Indies, Mr Macarthy?"

"I heard from a seaman who came on board the *Orestes* that you had accompanied your father on board the *Ouzel Galley*," he answered quietly. "Irishmen are wonderfully communicative, you know. It is an unusual thing for young ladies to take such a voyage in time of war."

"I sailed before war had broken out, or I am very sure my father would not have taken me," she replied, banishing the idea which had flashed across her mind. "He probably heard from the seaman that a young lady was staying with Miss Ferris, and thus guessed who I was," she thought to herself.

After again going round the grounds, the party returned to the house, where the other guests had begun to assemble. Captain Dupin and his officers were duly introduced and cordially welcomed to Waterford. Among others, Lieutenant Vinoy was brought up by the host.

"Though you gentlemen would look upon each other as enemies were you to meet on the ocean, here, I trust, you will be friends," said Mr Ferris. The officers bowed politely.

"I ave moche plaisir to meet Monsieur le Capitaine Dupin in dis hospitable maison," said the French lieutenant; "if ve evare

encounter vis one anodare on de sea, den ve fight like des braves hommes—n'est-ce pas, Monsieur le Capitaine?"

"I could not desire a greater honour," answered the Jersey man. "Nor, by my faith, could I," exclaimed the first lieutenant of the *Orestes*.

"Ah, I moche fear I remain prisonare here to do end of de war," sighed Monsieur Vinoy; "but, ma foi, I am too happy in dis charmante ville vid dese aimable young ladies to vish to leave. It was de fortune de la guerre vich brought me here, and I vill not complain."

"You might certainly have been much worse off," observed Captain Dupin. "I have no doubt you fought your ship, like a brave man, till all hope of victory was gone."

"Ve vill not talk of dat," answered the lieutenant, turning away, probably not quite relishing the remark, recollecting how he had been caught napping.

Three of the officers of the city militia were next introduced to the naval guests. Judged by their uniform, they were remarkably fine fellows, for their coats were blue, with scarlet linings and gilt buttons, their waistcoats and breeches being also of scarlet, and their hats richly adorned with gold lace. They had evidently, as was natural, a decidedly good opinion of themselves, and were somewhat inclined to look down upon the more simply dressed tars. The first lieutenant of the *Orestes* eyed them askance from under his shaggy eyebrows, apparently regarding them, for some reason or other, with no friendly feeling. After exchanging salutations, he at once turned aside and addressed himself to some of the civilians.

"We are expecting a king's ship every day to visit our harbour—the *Champion*, 18-gun sloop of war, Commander Olding," observed one of the gentlemen. "Contrary winds may have detained her, or perhaps she has fallen in with a Frenchman; and I will venture to say, if such is the case, that she has taken him, for the navy does not possess a more gallant and resolute officer than my friend."

Captain Dupin involuntarily shrugged his shoulders and bowed. "I have no doubt of the gallantry of the officers of the Royal Navy," he observed. An opportunity occurring, he stepped back and spoke a few words to his two lieutenants. The younger of the two looked somewhat agitated; though the elder, whatever thoughts were passing in his mind, retained a perfect

composure. He managed to hand in Norah to dinner, and to obtain a seat by her side. He spoke in a low voice, which once or twice, it seemed to her, was unnatural; but he accounted for it as his commander had done to Mr Ferris, by saying that he had received a wound in his mouth. He described many strange places and scenes he had visited, and appeared, notwithstanding the time he had been absent from his native country, to be well acquainted with various parts of Ireland. Altogether, he succeeded in making Norah think him an agreeable person, although ill-favoured and rather rough in his manner. Captain Dupin was equally successful in gaining the good opinion of Ellen, near whom he sat; while he contrived at the same time to ingratiate himself, by his lively conversation and the compliments he paid to Ireland, with most of the guests—and all agreed that he was superior to most of the privateer officers they had met.

The feast need not be described; the viands were in abundance, and claret, followed by whisky punch, flowed freely. A watchful observer would have discovered that neither of the officers drank more than they could help, though they were compelled to take no small quantity, simply in accepting the pledges they received in turn from the rest of the guests. The usual Orange toasts were drunk—especially the chief one, "The glorious and immortal memory!" the whole party standing, although they did not, as was occasionally done, shiver their glasses on the ground—the principal inhabitants of Waterford being great admirers of William of Orange. Soon after this the ladies retired. The officers, to the surprise of the other guests, rose to take their leave, and some were inclined to insist on their stopping.

"It is altogether *contra bonos mores*, gentlemen, to leave us at this hour with only half a cargo on board," exclaimed Mr Peter Vashan, one of the sheriffs of the city; "we shall suspect you of being no true men. Sit down and help us to finish another dozen of claret."

Similar expressions were uttered by others. Captain Dupin was firm, even though he saw angry and contemptuous glances cast on them by some of those whose rule of good fellowship he was about to infringe.

"To tell you the truth, gentlemen," he said, "I cannot be longer absent with my chief officers from the ship. You know that privateersmen are not the most orderly of characters; I am uncertain how my fellows may behave during my absence, though I can answer for their good conduct when I am among them. Before I left the ship I gave directions to have a slight

entertainment provided, and I invite our generous host, with all who favour me with their company, to bring their wives and families with them. The evening is fine, and the moon will be up to light you on your return; and, as an inducement to some who have an eye to business, I may add that we have on board part of the cargo of the last prize we took, rich silks and brocades, and other manufactures of France, and as I am in no hurry to go into port, I shall be glad to dispose of them on moderate terms; while I am anxious to purchase provisions and stores, which I am sure your town will supply of the best quality."

The captain, as he spoke, looked round on the party, and was perfectly satisfied that his invitation would be accepted, and that he would be able to obtain whatever he required for his ship. No further effort was made to detain him; even Mr Ferris promised to come, with his daughter and her friend, and most of the other gentlemen expressed their readiness to take the ladies of their families on board. Captain Dupin and his two lieutenants hurried down to their boats, which were in waiting at the quay, the crews having, according to orders, not even landed or held any communication with the people on shore, notwithstanding the pressing invitations they had received from the tavern-keepers on the quay.

"Begorra, I never knew a Jersey man who couldn't spake dacent English," exclaimed one of the men, who had been trying to induce the sailors to land. "Their captain may be what he says he is; but, shure, it's strange for sailors to come into harbour and not to look out for a dhrop of the crathur."

Similar remarks were made by others, though they ceased when the captain and his officers appeared and hailed the boats, which came to the shore and took them in. They immediately pulled down the river as fast as the crews could lay their backs to the oars. This proceeding began to excite the suspicions of the people on the quays, but they were once more lulled when it was known that they had gone on board to prepare for the reception of visitors from the shore.

When Norah heard of the invitation, she declined accepting it on the plea that her father required her attendance, which indeed was the truth, as he was more unwell than he had been for some days. Having also lately been at sea, to her there was no novelty in a visit to a ship; besides which, she had not entirely recovered from the agitation she had suffered the previous evening. Ellen would have remained to keep her company, pleased though she was at the thought of visiting a man-of-war; but her father wished to have her with him, as several



ladies, wives and daughters of the sheriffs and aldermen, were going. The party, consisting of nearly thirty ladies and gentlemen, soon assembled at the quay. Their respective boats having been got in readiness, with civic and private flags flying, the little flotilla proceeded at a rapid rate down the river, the tide being in their favour.

Mr Ferris had invited Lieutenant Vinoy, who had won the good opinion of his captors by his quiet behaviour and amiable manners, to accompany the party. He would probably like to see a British ship of war, and of course there was no fear of his being detained on board. The lieutenant at first hesitated, but finally accepted the invitation, and accordingly formed one of the party.

The boats made good way, and though the pull was a long one, they soon came in sight of the privateer, which lay in mid-channel.

"Why, that craft has a spring on her cable," observed Captain O'Brien, who had accompanied Mr Ferris; "her topsails are loose, as if she was ready to put to sea at a moment's notice."

"So probably she would, should she catch sight of a Frenchman in the offing," observed Mr Ferris; "the enemy's merchant vessels do not hesitate to stand along this coast, as we have so seldom a man-of-war on the look-out for them. Captain Dupin is of course aware of that, and was consequently in a hurry to get us to pay him a visit."

The ex-merchant captain said nothing, but still kept examining the *Orestes* with a critical eye. "She may be a Jersey privateer, but she has a French cut about her from her truck downwards," he muttered to himself.

The leading boats went alongside, and the officers were seen standing ready to assist the ladies on deck. The other boats followed, and the whole party were soon on board. Hurried arrangements had been made for their reception; the after-part of the main-deck was roofed in with flags, and supper-tables had been rigged on either side, already spread with white cloths, on which several servants were placing dishes of all sorts, while a band of musicians began to play lively airs.

"I must not boast of our music," said the captain, bowing to the ladies; "but finding that some of my men could play on various instruments, I formed them into a band, and perhaps the young

ladies may be inclined to walk a minuet or to try a country-dance."

No young ladies of the party were likely to decline such an offer. The captain himself led out Ellen, and two or three of his officers, with Lieutenant Vinoy and some of the young gentlemen from the shore, followed his example. The minuet being voted slow, a country-dance quickly succeeded it. The young ladies who had the officers of the ship for their partners were struck by their extraordinary taciturnity; for, with the exception of the young lieutenant who had visited the shore, not one of them spoke a word. Captain Dupin remarked that they were rough fellows, little accustomed to the society of ladies, and were too bashful to speak—though Miss Kathleen O'Rourke, one of the belles of the party, observed that they seemed anything but bashful from their looks.

"Ah, they are all more accustomed to French; indeed, scarcely one of my crew knows a word of English," said the captain.

While the younger members of the party were dancing away on deck, the captain, requesting another gentleman to take his place, invited the merchants who had honoured him by a visit to come below into his cabin, where they found an elegant supper spread, with an abundance of sparkling wines. He begged them to be seated, remarking that the dancers would be entertained on deck, and would prefer the fresh air to the somewhat confined atmosphere of the cabin.

"We older hands are seasoned, and the quiet we can here enjoy is more to our taste," he said. The party at once set to; the wine flowed freely, and all declared they had never tasted finer claret or Burgundy. The captain apologised for having only French wines on board, but remarked that he liked to have them of the best. After some time, one of the gentlemen reminded him that they had come on business, and begged to see samples of the goods he had to dispose of. Others expressed the same wish.

"As you desire it, gentlemen, I will have them brought," replied Captain Dupin; and he spoke in French to one of the people in attendance, who in a short time returned, accompanied by two other persons bringing in numerous parcels and cases, pieces of cloth, satin and silk. The captain called for a book, and read out the quantities of each, requesting his guests in the mean time to examine them.

"They are sold in good faith, and I believe you will not be disappointed," he observed. "Now, gentlemen," he continued, "I am in want of a considerable amount of fresh provisions and stores for my ship, and with which I feel sure you will be ready to supply me. I have, however, to remark that I require them immediately, and I shall feel obliged to you if you will send on shore and order them to be brought off without delay. From among so many honourable merchants I have no doubt that I can be speedily provided with the whole amount."

"Will you furnish us with a list of your wants?" asked Mr Ferris, "and I and my friends will gladly send them on board as soon as we return on shore."

"I do not mistrust your good intentions," answered Captain Dupin, "but as time is precious to me, and I should be sorry to lose you, I must request you to despatch orders to your managers and clerks to send off the stores while you remain on board."

"I thought so!" exclaimed the old sea-captain, bringing his fist down on the table. "What fools we were to be so caught! May I ask you, Captain Dupin, how long you have carried the British ensign at your peak?"

"Since I came in sight of Waterford harbour," answered Captain Dupin. "To confess the truth, I have practised a slight ruse on you; but be assured that I would not cause you or your friends, who are now so happily amusing themselves on deck, the slightest annoyance beyond the detention of a few hours—indeed, only until the stores you send for arrive."

"Is this vessel, then, not a Jersey privateer, as we were led to suppose?" asked Mr Ferris, with some little trepidation in his voice.

"No, sir; I must own that she is the *Coquille*, belonging to Dunkirk, and that I am Captain Thurot, of whom you may possibly have heard," answered the captain.

"Thurot! the most daring smuggler that ever crossed the Channel," whispered Captain O'Brien, in a low voice, to his neighbour; "we are caught like rats in a trap. He is as cunning as he is daring, and will keep us in durance till he gets what he wants."

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## Chapter Six.

**Captain Thurot demands a supply of provisions—The merchants send, for them—Captain Thurot's history—The discovery—Most of the guests allowed to take their departure—Mr Ferris, with Ellen and Captain O'Brien, remain as hostages—The Champion appears in the offing—Captain Thurot allows the hostages to go on shore in the dinghy.**

The astonishment and dismay of the worthy burghers of Waterford, who had thus been so unsuspectingly entrapped on board the French privateer, can better be imagined than described. "I am surprised, Captain Thurot, that since you are disposed to act so courteously towards us, you did not when on shore mention your wish, to have the stores sent on board, when I should have had no hesitation in procuring them for you," said Mr Ferris.

"My good sir, I would have done so, but I thought it more than probable that the stores would be stepped on their passage, and therefore, to make sure of getting them, I adopted my present plan," replied Captain Thurot; "besides which, I have enjoyed the opportunity of returning your hospitality, though in a very inadequate manner, I must confess. I have likewise recovered one of my officers, who, as he came on board with your consent, will not break his parole by remaining. I have also to request that you will send the men captured by the *Ouzel Galley* in exchange for your people, who will be detained on board till their arrival."

"But, sir," exclaimed Captain O'Brien, who was by this time fuming with rage, "how are we to return to Waterford without hands to man our boats?"

"Most of the young gentlemen on deck can pull, as I have no doubt can some of you, my friends," answered Captain Thurot; "and you may land at Passage, from whence you can send over to Waterford for conveyances for the ladies, as we should be sorry to detain them against their will—though we hope that they will continue on board and keep up the dance for some hours to come; it would be a pity to interfere with their amusement by telling them of the little ruse which we have been under the necessity of playing."

Mr Ferris and the other gentlemen consulted as to what was to be done. One thing was very certain, that they could not help

themselves; and they finally agreed to send off privately for the stores and provisions which had been demanded without letting those on deck know of what had occurred. Writing materials were produced; each merchant was politely requested to send for what he could supply.

"Be under no apprehension of any loss," said Captain Thurot; "I promise to pay liberally for all the stores I may receive. Though a privateer, I am not a robber; indeed, being your countryman, and loving Ireland as the home of my ancestors, I should be sorry to treat any of you with want of courtesy."

"A countryman of ours!" exclaimed Mr Ferris, looking up.

"Yes, sir," answered the captain. "I took the name of Thurot from my mother; my grandfather's name was O'Farrel—and proud I am of a name which has never been disgraced. But I must not interrupt you, gentlemen. Go on with your writing; I will by-and-by, if you wish it, entertain you with my history. I have nothing to be ashamed of."

The merchants resumed their pens, and having consulted together, their orders were soon made out and despatched by one of the boats which had brought them on board. In the mean time the party on deck were footing it away right merrily, entirely ignorant of what had been taking place below; the officers of militia, notwithstanding their gay uniforms, finding themselves eclipsed by the superior terpsichorean attainments of the Frenchmen. Lieutenant Vinoy seemed in high spirit, and efficiently performed the office of master of the ceremonies, apparently feeling himself quite at home. Some of the merchants, having finished their despatches, were about to go on deck.

"Stay, gentlemen," exclaimed the captain; "we will discuss a few more bottles of claret first. We will not interrupt the amusements of the young people by letting them know the character of my ship, for, depend on it, they will be treated with all due courtesy, and will not, I trust, regret having come on board."

The claret, which had been pronounced first-rate, was a temptation not to be resisted, and the guests, who had risen, making a virtue of necessity, resumed their seats, prepared to do justice to as many bottles as might be placed before them.

"Now, gentlemen," said Captain Thurot, "you shall, if it is your desire, hear my history; it will serve to occupy some of the time till the return of the boat."

"By all means, captain; we shall be glad to have an account of the life of one whom none of us are likely to forget in a hurry," said Mr Ferris. Others also expressed the same wish.

The captain laughed. "It is pleasant to feel that there is no risk of being forgotten by one's friends," he observed; "and you will be still less likely to do so when I have narrated a few of the incidents of my life. I may remark that some of my acts may not be looked upon by you in the same light as that in which I regard them. I must be judged by a different code to yours. I have never owed allegiance to your sovereign, and therefore you must not blame me for breaking his revenue laws in the way which I shall have to tell you I have done. However, to my history. My grandfather, Captain O'Farrel, was an officer in the army of King James the Second, and fought at the battle of the Boyne, so fatal to the royal cause. When the king was compelled to leave the country and retire to France, Captain O'Farrel was among the loyal gentlemen who followed his fortunes and accompanied him to Saint Germain. Here my grandfather, having been appointed one of the gentlemen of the king's household, met with Mademoiselle Thurot, a beautiful and accomplished young lady of ancient lineage, whose uncle, with whom she lived, was at that time a member of the parliament of Paris. A penniless adventurer, as Captain O'Farrel was regarded, was looked upon with distrust by the young lady's relatives, who endeavoured to keep him at a distance. Love scorns difficulties, especially when burning in the breast of an Irishman, and that Irishman a handsome, dashing officer who has seen service. The captain carried off the young lady, and she became his wife. So angry were her uncle and her other wealthy relations in Paris that they discarded her, refusing to contribute a sou to her support. My grandfather had alone the stipend he received from his royal master, and when King James died he was left to his own resources—they were small indeed. He tried by various means to make an income, but the natives had in every way the advantage of him; and at last, with his young wife, and the remnant of his property contained in a valise, he retired to Boulogne, in the hope that some of his wife's relatives who resided in that town would have larger bowels of compassion than those he had left in the city. The once gay and high-spirited officer found himself mistaken: they could not give any encouragement to one who had set so bad an example to the younger members of their families; should

they support Madame O'Farrel, their own daughters might be throwing themselves away on some of the Irish adventurers, with whom the country swarmed, and expect to be provided with houses and establishments.

"My poor grandfather, almost broken-hearted, was on the point of starvation, when he received a small pension allowed by the Queen of France to all those who had faithfully served their exiled sovereign. Hard service, wounds, and disappointment soon terminated his life; and three months after he had been laid in his grave my father was born—fatherless before he saw the light—and soon became motherless, for Madame O'Farrel survived her husband scarcely a year. The destitute condition of the orphan at length moved the compassion of some of his relatives of the Thurot family, who adopted him and brought him up under their own name. He was intended for the law, and studied for some years; but he had Irish blood coursing through his veins, and, under the expectation of obtaining a fortune with a wife, he fell in love and married. He was, however, disappointed in his hopes; but the lady soon dying, gave him an opportunity of again trying the lottery of matrimony. His second wife was Mademoiselle Picard, the daughter of a wine-merchant, or, as some people might have called him, a vintner; but if, as I hope was the case, he sold good wines, why should I be ashamed of him? My father's second wife was my mother; but at the moment of my birth my father was deprived of her by death, and I lost the advantage of being nursed by a tender parent. My father was heartbroken, and when he looked at me, a poor frail infant, he believed that I should not survive. He had two duties to perform—to have my mother buried, and to carry me to the baptismal font. While the tears were streaming from his eyes, as he held me in his arms, a dignified and handsomely dressed lady approached, and, having inquired and heard the cause of his grief, offered herself as sponsor to the motherless child. She was Madame Tallard, a lady of high rank and fortune—it being the custom of the country for ladies of distinction to offer themselves at that period of the year as sponsors for the children of the poorer classes. Madame Tallard did more; she sent my father a present for me, and desired that should I survive till her return I might be presented to her. She was as good as her word, and not only contributed to the expenses of my education, but I received much kindness from her and her family. When I was about fifteen, a stranger called on my father, and hearing whose son he was, announced that his name was O'Farrel, and claimed relationship. He stated that he was the commander of an Irish trader, and so worked upon my father and me by the account of the success of his voyages,

that he stirred up in my heart a strong desire to join him in his enterprises. As our cousin promised to introduce me to various members of the O'Farrel family, who were, he said, flourishing in Connaught, and would be certain to welcome me cordially, my father, seeing also that there was but little chance of my pushing my fortune in France, consented to my going; but as I at that time could not speak a word of English, I should have had considerable difficulty in making myself understood by my relatives or in understanding them.

"My Irish cousin having fitted me out, I set sail with him for Limerick; but I found him wonderfully addicted to the whisky bottle, and being also of a harsh and tyrannical disposition, I soon quarrelled with him. Instead of proceeding direct to Limerick, we put in to the Isle of Man, where, not wishing to remain longer with my cousin, I took the liberty of deserting the vessel, and, running away inland, I hid myself in the barn of a farmhouse till I thought she would have sailed. On coming out of my place of concealment, the first person I met was the owner of the property. He addressed me in English, of which language I could not, as I have said, then understand a word. On my telling him in French that the vessel to which I belonged had sailed away without me, he spoke to me in my native tongue, and asked if I was hungry—for I suppose I looked so. I replied that I was, and should be thankful for a loaf of bread and a bottle of wine. He laughed and said that wine was not the liquor of the country, but that, if I would accompany him, he would give me some bread and cheese and beer. I did not refuse his offer—and, *ma foi*, very excellent I found his viands. I asked him if he had anything for me to do, as I should be glad to serve him in return for his hospitality. He laughed again, telling me that I was a sharp boy, and that, if I wished it, he would take me into his employment. He did so, when I found that he was the owner of several luggers which ran between France and the English and Irish coasts to land contraband goods. After I had remained on shore for some time, he asked me if I would like to take a trip to sea. I was perfectly ready to do as he proposed, and the next day I went on board one of his vessels. We were never idle; sometimes bringing cargoes from France to the Isle of Man, and at others running the goods across from France to Ireland. I thus gained a fair knowledge of the trade. My employer was pleased with me, and after I had served him for some time he sent me over to Carlingford, where I remained for a year managing his business, which was to dispose of the goods landed from the luggers. It was here that, by constantly associating with the people of the country, and seldom meeting Frenchmen, I learned to speak English with



considerable fluency. On my return to the Isle of Man I resolved to put into execution an idea I had long entertained, of discovering my paternal relations. On telling my employer, he advised me, should I fail in my object, to come back to him without delay. Finding a vessel bound for Dublin, I took my passage on board her. Great was my disappointment on my arrival to discover that, although there was no end of O'Farrels, none of them would own me or acknowledge themselves related to the *ci-devant* captain of King James's army. Still, I was not to be beaten, and with a dozen shillings in my pocket I set off for Galway, where I heard that some of my family resided. I was not disowned—for the reason that I could find no one to disown me—and with my last shilling gone, I returned, footsore and weary, to Dublin.

"Well, gentlemen, I was now in an unfortunate plight, when I had the good luck to meet with the French valet of a certain noble lord whose name I will not mention. He was pleased to fall in with a person who could speak the language of *la belle France*, and on hearing that I was of gentle birth, he offered to obtain for me the situation of my lord's page. It suited my fancy, and, according to my notion, there was nothing in it derogatory; so I accepted his offer, and for two years enjoyed a pleasant and easy life—especially as her ladyship's waiting-woman was a very amiable and agreeable person. An unfortunate circumstance brought my connection with the family to a close, and I was compelled to take service with a noble earl whose residence was on the sea-coast of Antrim. I accompanied the earl on his shooting excursions, more as a companion than as a servant; but he was frequently absent from home, and I should have found the place very *triste* had I not fallen in with some of my old smuggling acquaintances. With them I occasionally made trips, to keep up my knowledge of the sea, and by their means I was able to supply my friends with pieces of Indian stuff, a few yards of muslin, or tea, or any other articles in request. As many other persons wished to possess these things, and were willing to pay for them, I commenced a regular commerce, which quickly filled my pockets with gold pieces. Leaving the earl's service, in which I could not conscientiously remain, I again took regularly to the sea, and having so many friends along the coast, I was able without difficulty to dispose of my cargoes. A lady of some consideration in the county was one of my chief purchasers. Some one giving information to the officers of excise that her house was full of smuggled goods, it was searched, and they were discovered, when I was accused of having brought them over. The officers accordingly laid their plans to entrap me. I

had come across from the Isle of Man with three other boats in company; they were seized, but I managed to make my escape, and sailed over to the coast of Scotland. Here we landed our cargo, which we hid in a cave—but how to sell it now that we had got it safely on shore was the question. I proposed that three of us should assume the character of pedlars, and dispose of it piecemeal throughout the country. My plan was adopted; a pleasant time I had of it, travelling from place to place and visiting the lord's castle and the farmer's cottage. So successful were we that my share amounted to a hundred and fifty pounds. With this sum in my pocket I travelled across to Edinburgh, where, dressing myself as a gentleman, I took lodgings, intending after seeing the city and enjoying myself for a brief space to return to France. I happened, however, to meet a Frenchman long settled in Edinburgh, and the owner of several vessels which ran between Leith and London. Happening to require a master for one of these vessels, he asked if I would take charge of her. To this I agreed, and carried her safely into the Thames; but, unhappily, a fire breaking out in a large warehouse near which she was moored, she with several other vessels was burnt, and I with some difficulty escaped on shore with the property I possessed. Assuming my Irish name, I took lodgings in Carey Street, Lincoln's Inn Fields, for the sake of being near a Mr Donnell, an Irish gentleman famous for his knowledge of mathematics, from whom I received instruction in navigation. Through his recommendation I obtained the command of a vessel, in which I made frequent trips backwards and forwards between the English and French coasts, greatly increasing my nautical knowledge and adding largely to my circle of friends. I conceived a warm admiration for the English, for though they have their faults, they are a brave and generous people, and my wish on all occasions has been to acknowledge their bravery and generosity. It was while I was in London that I used to visit a club held every Monday evening in the Seven Dials, and frequented almost exclusively by foreigners, mostly Frenchmen. One evening, after they had imbibed more than their usual quantity of wine, some of them began to abuse the English and Irish, speaking of them in the most contemptuous manner. I listened without uttering a word for some time, till my patience gradually evaporated, when, jumping up, I seized the two persons seated close to me by their noses, and, holding them fast, dragged them to the door, and then kicking them out, bolted it behind them. Returning to my seat, I said quietly, 'Come, gentlemen, fill your glasses and let us change the subject.' Not one of the rest uttered a word, or ventured again to speak ill of the nation among whom we were living.

"I shortly after this obtained the command of a vessel which ran between Dunkirk and London, occasionally putting part of our cargo on shore in any convenient spot where our agents were ready to receive it without troubling the revenue. For some years I carried on a free trade between various French ports and the English coast, my chief place of residence being London, where I had to go to settle my accounts; and then, wishing once more to see my father, I went to Boulogne, where he still lived. I was now, in consequence of my successful voyages, looked upon as the king of the smugglers. I was proud of the title—but pride is often, as you know, doomed to have a fall. I may venture to say that during that period I did not import and export less than twenty thousand pounds' worth of goods every year. It happened, however, that the French Government did not quite approve of my proceedings, and the president of the province, who happened to be the son of my old friend, Madame Tallard, received orders to put a stop to our commerce. Monsieur Tallard had been my friend and playmate in our youth, but duty compelled him to be vigilant, and I and several of my associates were arrested. Some of them were hanged, but through his interference my life was spared, though I was thrown into prison, where I languished for many a long day. At length, however, the French Government requiring the services of persons well acquainted with the English coast, I was sent for to Paris, where I was desired to give such information as I possessed. I now expected to obtain my liberty, but, instead of that, those official gentlemen considered it prudent to keep me shut up till they wanted me. My friend Monsieur Tallard again interfered, and I was suddenly transferred from prison to the command of a fine sloop of war. It was a pleasant change, I can assure you, gentlemen; but the intention of invading England having been abandoned by the Government, I found that my ship was not likely to be employed. I accordingly obtained leave to resign my commission, and to take the command of the *Coquille* privateer, the ship on board which I have had the pleasure of receiving you as my guests."

Whatever might have been the opinion held by the Irish merchants as to the career of their host, they did not think fit to express them.

"I congratulate you, Captain Thurot, on having at length attained a position suited to your courage and talents," said Mr Ferris; "and as you have thought fit to play a trick on us, we have to thank you for the courteous way in which you have carried it out. I hope your wants will be supplied, and that we

shall stand exonerated with our Government for having furnished an enemy with stores."

"I will give you a certificate to the effect that you are under compulsion," said the captain; "and if you in any way suffer, I will do my best to make good the loss."

"That would be a difficult matter," observed Captain O'Brien, "though I hope that our known loyalty will prevent our being subject to any unjust suspicions. Now, gentlemen," he continued, turning to friends, "we should be wishing our entertainer farewell, or we shall lose the flood."

The party rose. "I am sorry that, if you do go, you will yourselves have to pull the boats up the river, unless some of you gentlemen and Mr Ferris like to remain as hostages instead of your men," said Captain Thurot. "Pray understand that I do not doubt the word of any one of you, but were I to allow all to return, the authorities on shore might not consider themselves bound by your promises, and might withhold the stores I require, as well as the men, I am somewhat anxious also about my first lieutenant, who remained on shore about some business of his own. I will not, however, make you answerable for him, unless he is taken prisoner, and then I shall expect you to return him safe on board; and I must have a promise from you that you will do so. Perhaps, in order to induce those same authorities, who are collectively at times somewhat stubborn, to act more promptly, it might be convenient if Mr Ferris and his daughter and you, Captain O'Brien, would consent to remain on board my ship until my people are sent back. Monsieur Vinoy came on board with your full sanction, so that I consider myself at liberty to detain him. In the case of Mr Ferris and Captain O'Brien complying with my wish, you can take your men to row the boats up the river. The plan will, I should think, greatly facilitate matters."

"Not a bad plan," exclaimed two or three of the other gentlemen who were to obtain their liberty. "Ferris, you will not object to remain? nor you, O'Brien? Without our men we shall be hours getting up to Waterford."

Mr Ferris was always ready to sacrifice himself for the public good, though he would have preferred returning home.

"I must hear what my daughter says on the subject," he answered; "I will not detain her against her wish. At the same time, having perfect confidence in the honour of Captain Thurot,

I am ready to remain on board, in order, my friends, to save you and your families from inconvenience or anxiety."

"In that case, so am I," exclaimed Captain O'Brien. "I had my suspicions from the first that all was not right, and I deserve some punishment for allowing myself and you to be entrapped."

"Very kind!"

"Very generous!"

"Very public-spirited!" cried the other gentlemen, who were eager to get out of the scrape as soon as possible. It became necessary at last to let the party on deck know the true state of the case, and to desire them to prepare for their departure. Some would not even now believe that they had been deceived; others were very indignant. The militia officers pulled their moustaches, swearing that they would return with their men and capture the pirate, although they could not help acknowledging that they had been politely treated by the Frenchmen. Ellen was perfectly ready to remain with her father; she had a thorough confidence in sailors of every nation, and as it now wanted but two or three hours only to daylight, she could have the enjoyment of a row up the river in the morning instead of during the night. She sent a message to Norah begging that she would not be anxious on her account.

Nothing could exceed the politeness of Captain Thurot and his officers as they handed their visitors into the boats, now manned by their proper crews, who swore that the Jersey men were broths of boys, and it was just a pity that they couldn't speak a little better Irish. Though still able to pull, the boatmen gave undoubted proofs that they had not been stinted in their liquor.

"Now, bhoys," cried one of the men, standing up and pulling off his hat, "three cheers for the Jerseyman, and may good luck go with her on her cruise—hip! hip! hurrah!" and their voices sounded far and wide across the waters of the harbour. The boats were soon lost to sight in the darkness. Mr Ferris and Ellen, with Captain O'Brien, having stood watching them to the last, Lieutenant Vinoy drew near and expressed a hope that Mr Ferris would not accuse him of breaking his parole. "For had I done so, I should not have been worthy of addressing you," he remarked.

"Certainly not, my friend," said Mr Ferris; "we brought you on board, and your captain tells me that he has detained you."

"Ah, that is indeed a satisfaction," exclaimed the lieutenant. "I may now give a message from the captain, who begs that you will take possession of his cabin, which is entirely at your service; you must consider it yours till the return of the boats with our men. They will soon, I hope, for your sakes, make their appearance."

Mr Ferris felt satisfied at having sacrificed himself for the benefit of his friends. Not that he experienced the slightest apprehension of having to suffer any inconvenience. Ellen declared that she liked the fun, and only hoped that Norah would not be anxious about her. Still the time went by; the grey dawn was breaking, and no boats had appeared. Captain O'Brien, who was much more fidgety than his friend, frequently went on deck to take a look-out. Ellen, who was reclining on a sofa, had fallen asleep, while her father sat by her side. A stream of bright light coming through the cabin windows awoke her. Just then Captain O'Brien came down.

"By my faith, I believe our friend is going to carry us off to sea!" he exclaimed; "I suspected there was something in the wind, and, going aloft, I discovered a large ship in the offing; so did the Frenchmen, and they immediately commenced hauling on their spring and letting fall the canvas ready to make sail in a moment. They don't like going without their men and the promised provisions; but they will have to do it if the boats don't return quickly, for I'm much mistaken if the vessel I saw isn't the *Champion*, which we have so long been looking for."

Ellen, who had hitherto been asleep, started as she heard Captain O'Brien speak. "The *Champion*, do you say?" she asked.

"I think it more than probable that she is," said the captain. Ellen did not reply, but the thought—and to her it was an agitating one—immediately occurred to her mind, "The *Champion* will surely attack the French ship." It was confirmed by the next remark her father made.

"If so, the Frenchman will have to fight for it, for Captain Olding is not likely to let him go without questioning him," said Mr Ferris.

"But where do you think, my friend, we shall be in that case?" asked Captain O'Brien. "Thurot will scarcely send us on shore first in one of his boats, and I see no signs of our own."

"Could we not get him to make a signal for a boat from the shore? He surely will not detain my daughter, with the prospect

of having to fight his ship," exclaimed Mr Ferris, becoming anxious. "How mad I was to allow her to remain!"

"Do not be alarmed about me. I trust that we shall have no difficulty in getting on board the *Champion* should she enter the harbour," said Ellen.

"We may be confident that Thurot will not wait for her here," said Captain O'Brien; "but I will go on deck and get him without delay to make a signal for a boat from the shore, if ours are not in sight. If they are, he will probably wait for them."

On going on deck Captain O'Brien found that the corvette had slipped her cable, that the topsails were set, and that the crew were aloft loosing the other sails. Still, in spite of the wide folds of canvas which were rapidly spread on the ship, the wind was so light that she made but little way. There was yet time for a boat to come off from the shore, and Captain Thurot without hesitation made a signal as he was requested, firing a gun to draw attention. No boat however, appeared.

"Captain Thurot," exclaimed Captain O'Brien, going up to him, "I must beg that you will send Miss Ferris and her father on shore before you leave the harbour. It would be terrible to expose her to all the risks of a battle—and that you will be engaged in one with yonder ship, I have no doubt. She is a British ship of war, and is sure to attack you when she finds out your character."

"But I intend to avoid her if I possibly can, and if compelled to fight, I will place Miss Ferris and you two gentlemen in as safe a position as we can find on board," said Captain Thurot.

"The safest, however, would not be satisfactory under the circumstances," replied Captain O'Brien. Captain Thurot looked greatly annoyed.

"I know that," he said, "but it is necessary to send the boats ahead to tow. Were I to run the risk of losing the ship, the crew, and even the officers, would mutiny—these privateersmen are difficult characters to deal with; as it is, they will be discontented at not obtaining the stores and recovering their shipmates. My first lieutenant, also, is on shore. If I send you away, I have no guarantee that the stores will be delivered, or that my people will be restored to me."

"You shall have the word of honour of two Irish gentlemen," answered Captain O'Brien, "that should yonder vessel not prove

to be the *Champion*, or any other man-of-war, everything shall be arranged as you wish; the stores and men shall be sent off to you, and your first lieutenant restored, if we can find him."

Still Captain Thurot hesitated. "You believe that ship out there to be a British sloop of war?" he asked.

"I feel almost certain that she is the *Champion*; that she is a large vessel of your own class, and carries eighteen guns of heavy metal; and, moreover, I believe that if you venture to engage her she will take you. If you follow my advice you will do your best to escape from her."

While this conversation was going on, the larger boats were being lowered, and were now sent ahead to tow. There was a light air from the westward; the stranger's courses were rising above the horizon in the south-east, just clear of Hook Tower. Could the *Coquille* once got out to sea, she might either by running before the wind round the south-eastern point of Ireland, or by keeping close-hauled stand along the southern coast towards Cape Clear.

"I confess that I am unwilling to part with you till the last moment," said Captain Thurot, "but my courtesy will not allow me to detain the young lady and to expose her to the risk she would have to run. I will therefore give you my small boat, if you will take charge of her and convey Miss Ferris and her father to the shore."

"With all my heart, and I am much obliged to you," exclaimed Captain O'Brien. "If you will order the boat to be lowered, I will get them up on deck. The sooner we are off the better; the tide is sweeping out of the harbour, and we shall have a hard pull of it, at all events."

He hurried below, and conveyed the satisfactory intelligence to his friends. By the time that they were on deck the dinghy was alongside, the courses were hauled up, and the men ahead ordered to cease pulling. Captain O'Brien stepped into the boat; Mr and Miss Ferris descended the accommodation ladder. After a brief farewell to Captain Thurot, who with his officers bowed them politely out of the ship, the dinghy shoved off.

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## Chapter Seven.



**Ellen and her father, with Captain O'Brien, watch the Champion and Coquille from Portala Head—The fight—The ships disappear in the distance—Return to Waterford—News of the capture of O'Harrall—Ellen's anxieties—Gerald sent to Mrs Massey—During the widow's absence Owen receives a visit from O'Harrall—Conceals him—The pursuers come to the cottage—The widow's alarm—Owen enables O'Harrall to escape.**

The worthy captain had not handled a pair of oars for many a year, but he seized the sculls and pulled away lustily towards the western side of the harbour. As to rowing up it against the strong tide then running out, that, he saw, was hopeless, Mr Ferris being no oarsman. The *Coquille's* sails were let fall, and the men in the boats giving way, she in a short time was clear of the harbour, and was seen to stand close-hauled towards the south-west, the tide being in her favour. The stranger had by this time made her out, and was steering on the opposite tack towards the harbour's mouth. Being far to leeward, there appeared but little chance, unless the breeze should freshen, of the two ships meeting.

"I only hope they may," said the captain, as he tugged away at the oars. "Thurot is a fine fellow, no doubt about that; but he deserves to be punished for his impudence, and if the *Champion* gets alongside him, he'll find that he's caught a Tartar. Olding isn't the man to part company with an enemy till she strikes, or one or the other goes to the bottom. His officers are like him, I hear, and I shouldn't be astonished to see the *Coquille* brought in a prize before many hours are over."

Ellen looked pale and anxious while the captain was speaking.

"We knew Mr Foley, the second lieutenant of the *Champion*, very well in Dublin, when she lay at Kingstown," observed Mr Ferris—"a fine young fellow. I am sure also that you have described Captain Olding truly."

The captain was all the time pulling away with might and main, now looking ahead to judge of the direction to take, and now watching the two ships.

"Thurot hasn't calculated on getting becalmed under the land; if he does that, he'll find the *Champion* soon walk up to him," he observed. "Pulling is harder work than I thought for, or my arms have grown stiffer than they used to be. The sooner we can get

on shore the better, and we can wait there till the tide turns, when perhaps we shall find some hooker running up to Waterford which will take us in tow. I'll pull in for Portala Bay, which you see just inside Red Head."

"As you please," said Mr Ferris. "By climbing to the top of the Head we shall, I fancy, be able to watch the proceedings of the two ships."

The captain pulling on, the boat soon reached a small bay just to the northward of a headland at the western side of the entrance of Waterford harbour. Ellen was eager at once to climb to the summit of the height. The captain and Mr Ferris having drawn up the boat, they set off, and were not long in gaining it. From thence they could command a view of the whole coast of Waterford as far as Youghal Bay, towards which the *Coquille* was standing. Her boats had been hoisted up, but she was still, even with a favourable tide, making but slow progress. The ship to the eastward had now come completely into view. The captain took a steady look at her.

"She is a sloop of war—I thought so from the first," he exclaimed, "and from the cut of her canvas I have little doubt that she is English."

As he spoke, the stranger's ensign blew out from her peak.

"Yes, I knew I was right—she is the *Champion*, depend on it. If the breeze favours her, far as she is to leeward, she'll be up to Captain Thurot before noon," he continued. "If she once gets him within range of her guns, she'll not let him go till he cries peccavi."

Ellen was seated on a rock which formed the highest part of the headland. Even under ordinary circumstances she would have watched the two vessels with much interest, but the intensity of her feelings may be supposed, as she thought of one who was on board the British ship; for although the gallant lieutenant had not yet spoken, she fully believed that he had given her his heart, and she could not avoid confessing to herself that she had bestowed hers in return. In a few short hours he might be engaged in a deadly strife with a ship equal in size and the number of her crew to the *Champion*; and though she could not doubt that the British would come off victorious, yet she well knew the risk to which each of her gallant crew would be exposed. The *Champion* had stood within a mile of the mouth of the harbour, when she tacked and steered for the French ship. The breeze, as Captain O'Brien had foretold would be the case,

gradually favouring her, enabled her to go much faster through the water than the other. The captain several times pulled his watch, resembling a big turnip in size, out of his fob.

"The tide will soon be on the turn, and if we are to get home to-night we must take advantage of it," he observed, "though I should mightily like to see the end of this."

"Oh, do remain, I pray you," said Ellen; "we can have no difficulty in getting back to Waterford, for the weather promises to be so fine. Do you think it possible that Monsieur Thurot can escape?"

"The chances are against him, Miss Ellen, but it is hard to say what may happen," answered Captain O'Brien. "Captain Olding is not the man, as I have observed before, to let an enemy slip through his fingers; in less than half an hour he will get near enough to the Frenchman to send his shot on board, and he'll stick tightly to him, no fear of that."

Ellen held her breath, as she at length saw the ships approaching each other. A puff of white smoke issued from the starboard bow of the *Champion*. The *Coquille* returned it from her stern-chasers, but the shot fell harmlessly into the water. Again and again the *Champion* fired; it was evident that she could only bring her foremost gun to bear, unless by keeping away and thereby losing ground.

"Thurot knows the coast as well as, or better than, Olding, and is unwilling to lose the advantage of being to windward," exclaimed Captain O'Brien. "See, he keeps his luff, and the *Champion* is compelled to do the same; I thought it would be so. The *Champion* is losing the breeze, which has hitherto been in her favour, and if she doesn't manage to wing the Frenchman, the fellow, who has evidently a fast pair of heels, will slip by between her and the land. See, she's not going to let him do that. Hurrah! she's kept away; there go her broadside guns. They'll have told, I hope, with effect on the Frenchman. No, by George! every spar is standing," exclaimed the captain, as the smoke from the *Champion's* broadside cleared away. She immediately again came to the wind. The ships were still too far apart for the shot to do much damage; they both stood on for some time longer without firing, and were now so greatly increasing their distance from Red Head that the three spectators could but imperfectly discern what took place. Again wreaths of smoke circled above the side of the *Champion*, and flashes were seen to issue from that of the *Coquille*, as,

imitating the English ship, she put up her helm and kept away across the bows of the latter.

"Thurot has made up his mind to run for it," cried the captain; "he's squaring away his yards, and Olding's after him. The Frenchman has no stomach for a fight, that's very certain; those privateersmen prefer plunder to glory. If Olding doesn't ply him briskly with his guns, the chase will get away after all. I had hopes of seeing the *Coquille* brought in here as a prize; we could then have afforded to forgive her captain the trick he played us."

In vain the captain and his companions waited for any event to show them which ship was likely to be the victor. They were both at length hull down, their masts and spars standing apparently uninjured. Poor Ellen had watched them with intense interest. How long it might be before her anxiety could be removed, she could not tell; that the *Champion* would be taken, she did not believe possible. But, alas! many of those on board might be killed or wounded; several days might pass before the *Champion* could come into Cork harbour. With straining eyes she gazed towards the two ships gradually become less and less distinct.

"Come, Ferris—come, Miss Ellen, my dear—we must be on our homeward voyage, or our friends will become alarmed, and it will be reported that we have been carried off by the Frenchman," said Captain O'Brien.

Very unwillingly Ellen left the height and accompanied her father and the captain to the boat. He had still some distance to pull, though he kept a look-out for a larger boat or a sailing hooker on her way up to Waterford. At length a little high-sterned craft was seen standing out of one of the many small bays which indent the western shore of the harbour. The captain stood up, and shouted and waved, and the hooker, hauling her wind, hove to to await their coming. The skipper, knowing he should be amply recompensed, was delighted to receive them on board and to take their boat in tow; and Ellen, seated on a sail, was wafted up the river in a very different style to that of Cleopatra in her barge, as far as the mouth of the Suir; when, the wind failing, Captain O'Brien, with the assistance of one of the crew of the hooker, pulled up the remainder of the distance to Waterford in the *Coquille's* dinghy.

It was late in the evening. As they approached the quay they were warmly cheered by a number of the townspeople who had heard of their adventure, information of the departure of the

French privateer having already been brought up to Waterford. It was soon evident to Mr Ferris that some other event of importance had occurred.

"What has happened, my friends?" he inquired.

"Shure, yer honour, one of the French officers has been caught hiding away in your garden," answered Dan Connor, who was one of the nearest to him among the crowd. "The thief of the world! he made a mighty fine fight of it; but we ran in on him, after he had cut down three or four of us, two being kilt entirely—but we knocked his sword out of his hand and seized him, and he's lodged comfortably in the Ring Tower, out of which he isn't likely to get in a hurry."

"Of which French officer do you speak?" asked Mr Ferris; "we left our late prisoner on board the *Coquille*."

"It wasn't him, yer honour, but a big fellow with, a patch on his cheek and another over his eye," answered Dan. "He isn't a Frenchman at all at all, but from the oaths he swore he's Irish all the world over—the thunderin' big villain—no other than Brian O'Harrall, who has a price on his head. It cost us pretty dear to take him too."

Further inquiries convinced Mr Ferris that the supposed French officer was the outlaw who had so long evaded the grasp of justice. The prisoner, he understood, was under a strong guard. Ellen being much fatigued, he accompanied her home before going to ascertain particulars. Norah, who greeted her affectionately, looked pale and agitated.

"I have had a dreadful fright," she said. "My father had insisted on my taking a turn in the garden, and as I reached the rocky walk at the end of the terrace, out of sight of the house, who should appear before me but the first lieutenant of the privateer, who had dined with us yesterday. I had then an undefined suspicion of him, and no sooner did he speak than I was convinced that he was the very person whom we met the other evening, and who attempted to carry me off, and who, notwithstanding his disguise, was, I am sure, the man who was picked up at sea by the *Ouzel Galley*, and acted as second mate on board her. I knew that I had had the misfortune to excite his admiration, but I hoped when he was taken on board the privateer which captured us that I should never again see him. He, however, it appears, was well known to Captain Thurot, who had appointed him his first lieutenant. He made the most outrageous professions of affection; I, of course, would not

listen to him; and dreading his violence, before he was aware of what I was about to do, I darted from him and ran, faster than I had ever run before in my life, towards the house. He pursued, entreating me to stop and hear what he had to say. Feeling that he was not to be trusted, I continued my flight, and providentially just then caught sight of Dan Connor and some of the crew of the *Ouzel Galley*, who had come up to see my father, and while waiting to do so had been allowed to stroll into the garden. Several of the workmen and two of the gardeners, who happened to be close at hand, joined the seamen, and the whole party rushed at the stranger, who had by this time reached the bottom of the hill and found retreat impossible. On this, I understand, he drew his sword and made a desperate defence, and though unhappily he wounded two of the men, the rest boldly threw themselves upon him, and wrenching his sword from his hand held him fast. During his violent struggles to free himself the patch over his eye fell off, as did his heavy moustache, and some of the men, as they examined his features, recognised the pirate O'Harrall, the very man of whom Mrs Massey gave you the account. I had rushed into my room, too much frightened and agitated to watch what was taking place. He was carried off to prison, and will of course be brought to trial, in which case I fear that I shall have to appear as a witness against him. I was afraid for some time to tell my father, for the same reason that I did not before inform him of the attack made on us. However, he now knows all that has happened, and he tells me that he is well acquainted with O'Harrall's history, and believes him capable of the most desperate acts of violence."

Ellen had forgotten her own anxiety in listening to Norah's recital. She now described to her friend what had occurred, and the feeling which had agitated her while watching the two ships. Norah offered such comfort as one young lady under the circumstances could give another.

"I have heard my father say that ships of war often meet and fire many shot without doing each other any harm," she remarked; "and you know, my dear Ellen, that even though some of the crew of the *Champion* may be killed or wounded, there is no especial reason that Lieutenant Foley should be among the sufferers; and it is the lot of naval officers to be constantly exposed to the risk of battle in war time."

"I know it too truly," replied Ellen; "but it was dreadful to see the ship on board which I knew him to be sailing away to attack

so renowned and skilful a captain as Monsieur Thurot—then, to have to wait so long for the issue of the battle.”

“Perhaps we shall have tidings of the arrival of the *Champion* to-morrow,” remarked Norah; “and, from what you tell me, Monsieur Thurot was more anxious to escape than, to fight.”

“So I at first thought,” said Ellen; “but I heard Captain O’Brien tell my father that he suspected Thurot’s object was to draw the English ship away from the Irish coast, that should he come off victorious he might have the better chance of securing his prize. It was a relief to me to hear Captain O’Brien say he did not for a moment believe that the *Champion* would be beaten; on the contrary, that it would be much more likely that she would take the *Coquille*. Still, there must inevitably have been a fierce battle; and oh, Norah, if you knew how I feel for Norman Foley, you would understand my anxiety.”

“I can fully understand it,” said Norah, “and I often think how sad it must be for poor women left at home, to know that those they love are exposed to dangers and hardships of all sorts which they are utterly powerless to relieve. Such must be the lot of all sailors’ wives and those who have engaged their hearts to sailors—and yet it would be cruel to the poor men if on that account they could get no one to love them.”

“Yes, indeed,” said Ellen, sighing; “but then, remember, we can pray for them, and we can do our best to make them happy when they return home.”

Norah at length persuaded Ellen, who had had but little rest on the previous night, to lie down and try to forget her anxiety in sleep. Soon afterwards Gerald came in. He had been rather indignant at not having been taken when the party visited the supposed Jersey privateer.

“Had I seen Monsieur Thurot, I should have recognised him at once, for I marked him well when he came on board the *Ouzel Galley*; and I suspect, too, I should have detected his first lieutenant, in spite of his disguise,” he exclaimed. “I wonder you did not find out that he was our mate Carnegan.”

“I did more than once fancy that I knew his voice, but it seemed so improbable that he should be on board a Jersey privateer that I banished the idea,” answered Norah. “Now, Gerald, I want you to go and inquire after Mrs Massey and Owen; they may hear rumours of what has occurred, and will wish to know

the truth. You will have time to go there and be back again before dark."

Gerald, who was always good-natured and anxious to please Norah, undertook to go and deliver any message, written or oral, she might wish to send. She had already a note prepared for Owen, and with it Gerald set off. He found Owen much better, and ready, if the doctor would let him, to walk into Waterford to see Norah; but Mrs Massey was sure that he overrated his strength, and told Gerald that Norah must not expect him for some days. She was much interested at hearing the account which Gerald gave of the various occurrences of the last two days.

"And can that unhappy man have really been captured? What a sad ending to a once respected family!" she exclaimed. "He cannot expect pardon. I bear him no ill-will, though his family has been the ruin of ours; and even now, in the hope that he may have time for repentance, I would thankfully hear that he had escaped rather than suffer the death his crimes deserve."

"I should certainly not have suspected that the Carnegan we had as second mate on board the *Ouzel Galley* could have been a murderer and pirate," said Gerald. "The men, however, were inclined to believe from the way he was saved that he was in league with the Evil One, and they will now be convinced that such was the case."

"Satan would rather have let him drown," said Mrs Massey, "unless indeed he wished to employ him in some still more wicked deed. He undoubtedly makes use of those who willingly yield to him as his tools to work out his designs."

While Mrs Massey had been talking to Gerald, Owen had been inditing an answer to Norah's note, with which, rather later than he had intended, Gerald set off to return home. It was quite dark before he reached the town. He was proceeding along a narrow lane which offered a shorter cut than the high road, when he heard the footsteps of a person running at full speed, and directly afterwards a man rushed by him whose countenance he could not see; but it struck him at the time that the figure greatly resembled that of Carnegan, the second mate of the *Ouzel Galley*. He was doubtful for a moment whether he should follow: though brave enough under ordinary circumstances, he felt pretty certain that if such was the case O'Harrall would not scruple to knock him on the head or to blow his brains out; and so he did the next best thing which occurred to him—he ran on, intending to make his way to the Ring Tower



to give information that the prisoner had escaped; though he fully expected to meet a party in hot pursuit of the fugitive.

Mrs Massey was at supper with her son, when there came a knock at the door, and a bare-headed damsel appeared.

"Mrs Massey, my mother's taken mighty bad entirely, and will it plaze ye to come and see what ye can do for her?" she exclaimed, in a petitioning tone. Mrs Massey, who was proud of the medical knowledge she exercised for the benefit of her neighbours, immediately arose.

"Indeed, and I'll come, Molly," she answered. "Just wait till I put on my hood and fill my basket with such things as I may require."

She speedily getting ready, told Owen that she would soon be back, and that Mrs Hogan would know that she could not leave him all alone for any length of time; and off she set, with Molly Hogan carrying a lantern before her.

Owen trimmed the lamp which burnt on the table, and sat down to read till his mother's return. He had not long been thus occupied, when hearing the door open he looked up, expecting that Mrs Massey had returned for something she had omitted to take with her. Instead of his mother, he saw standing before him the second mate of the *Ouzel Galley*. For a moment he thought that he must be dreaming.

"You know me, Owen Massey," exclaimed his visitor, "You saved my life once, when the devil well-nigh had me in his clutches, and I come to throw myself on your generosity—to ask you to render me a further service. Should I be recaptured, I should be doomed to the gallows, and I have no fancy for that fate. Conceal me for a few hours, and I shall be able to get off in safety; refuse to do so, and I shall fall into the hands of my pursuers."

Owen hesitated, not because he was aware that the man before him was O'Harrall, the enemy of his family, but because he was unwilling to expose his mother to the penalty of harbouring a fugitive from justice. He rose from his seat and said, "I now know you to be Brian O'Harrall." His visitor started, and drew back a pace, as if about to leave the cottage, believing that all hope of assistance must be abandoned. "Stay," continued Owen, his generous feelings getting the better of him, "I do not on that account the less desire to save you if I can. Should you not have been traced here, I may yet be able to do so."

"I am not likely to have been traced, for my flight can scarcely yet have been discovered," answered O'Harrall. "You will run no risk, and I will be grateful if I can find an opportunity. I have proved that I am not destitute of gratitude. When on board the *Ouzel Galley*, I obtained better terms for you from Thurot than you would otherwise have enjoyed."

"Follow me, then," said Owen, "and I will conceal you till you have an opportunity of escaping; but promise me that you will not again return to this part of the country."

"I have no hesitation in doing that, for I intend to do my best to escape from Ireland, never with my own free will to come back," answered O'Harrall.

"That is sufficient," said Owen; and he led the way through the cottage to an outbuilding at some short distance, over which there was a loft, long disused. Owen found a ladder, by which the fugitive mounted to it.

"You can easily leap to the ground when you think fit to continue your flight," said Owen, who had followed him up. "I will bring you some food, to afford you support both for the present and on your journey; and if you want money, I will supply you."

"I give you my thanks, but I have a purse full of gold. Be quick, however, with the food, or my pursuers may be here and prevent you from bringing it to me," replied O'Harrall.

Owen on descending removed the ladder, and, hurrying into the pantry, collected such provisions as he could most easily find, and for the disappearance of which he could account the next day to his mother. He carried them to the fugitive, and then again replaced the ladder in the spot from which he had taken it. Having done this, he returned to the sitting-room and threw himself into a chair, resting his head on his hand. He had performed a generous action, but still he questioned himself whether it was a right one. He was attempting to conceal from justice an undoubted malefactor; it was an act then, as now, too common in Ireland, and was sure to meet with the sympathy of the people should it be discovered. Owen possibly might have partaken somewhat in the feeling general among all classes, that it was a right thing to protect those in distress, whatever their crimes against society. A more generous motive had influenced him, and he might have been less inclined to act as he had done should a person indifferent to him, and equally criminal in the sight of the law, have thrown himself upon his

mercy. Owen did not know the full wrong O'Harrall had attempted to inflict upon him; even had he been aware of this, it might not have altered his conduct.

Some time passed before his mother returned; during it, he did his best to calm his feelings, for he had determined not to tell her what had occurred, hoping that before the next morning O'Harrall would have disappeared. Shortly after she entered the cottage the old lady urged Owen to go to bed.

"You look somewhat pale, my son," she said, holding the light to his face, "and late hours do not suit an invalid."

"When you set me the example, I will go and turn in," answered Owen, laughing. As he was speaking, loud shouts were heard, and several people came running up and knocking loudly at the door.

"Who is it?" asked Mrs Massey.

"Shure, it's Pat Magragh. Are ye safe inside, Mrs Massey, honey?" inquired one of the men from the outside.

"And where else should I be?" answered the widow, recognising the voice and going to the door. Owen felt very uncomfortable, for he fully expected that inquiries would be made for the fugitive.

"Shure, it's no matther at all, thin," exclaimed the man. "As we got to Molly Hogan's, she told us that ye'd just left the cottage, and it might be the big villain we were hunting might have fallen in wid ye and done ye harm; but if ye didn't see him, it's all right, and we must be joining the rest of the bhoys who ran after him."

"Whom do you mean?" asked Mrs Massey.

"Brian O'Harrall, to be shure," was the answer; "he's broken out of the Ring Tower, nobody knows how—except he got the help of the devil and his imps."

"Thank Heaven I did not meet him! it would have well-nigh driven me out of my wits," said the widow, trembling at the thoughts of the supposed danger she had escaped.

"Good night, Mrs Massey; keep your door closed, lest he should turn like a fox and bolt in," cried Pat Magragh, as he and his companions hurried away in pursuit, as they believed, of the

escaped criminal. Mrs Massey did as she was advised, and sat down, endeavouring to calm her agitation, and feeling but little inclined to go to bed.

"It is useless to sit up, mother," observed Owen, after Mrs Massey had been talking for some time about the escape of O'Harrall. "The man, if he has got away, is certain not to return. At all events, you will be as safe in bed as anywhere else."

After some persuasion Mrs Massey consented to retire to bed, and after listening for some time at last fell asleep. The window of Owen's room looked directly down upon the outbuilding in which the fugitive was concealed. Owen felt much relieved, from believing that those who had gone on were not likely to think of examining the place; still, he could not go to sleep, and putting out his candle he sat down at the window to watch, hoping that O'Harrall would take the opportunity of slipping out and getting off to a distance, no watched in vain. After some hours he heard the tramp of feet along the road and the voices of men shouting to each other. They were the people who had gone in chase of O'Harrall. Could the outlaw have continued his flight and, after all, have been captured? Owen listened attentively, and felt convinced that they were returning to the city without having overtaken the fugitive, he could no longer restrain his wish to ascertain whether O'Harrall was still in the loft, and cautiously descending the stair, he lighted a lantern and went out. To place the ladder so as to reach the trap was the work of a moment. He ascended to the loft, and throwing the light towards the further end, he saw the man he came to look for sleeping soundly.

Before Owen had advanced a step O'Harrall awoke and, springing to his feet, saw who it was.

"I came to tell you," said Owen, "that the men who had gone in pursuit of you have, to the best of my belief, returned to the city, and now would be a favourable time to make your escape."

O'Harrall hesitated. "What o'clock is it?" he asked.

"Just past midnight," replied Owen.

"Are you certain that the men who are hunting for me have returned to the city?" asked O'Harrall.

"Judging from what I heard, and the direction in which their voices died away, I am confident of it," said Owen.

"Then I will follow your advice," answered O'Harrall. "You have increased the debt of gratitude I owe you. I have no means of showing that I am grateful; but do me one favour more—accept this ring; it belonged to your family. It has a curious device on it, which is its chief value. I wish you to believe that, reckless as I am, I still retain some of the feelings I possessed when you knew me in days gone by. Come, take it; I cannot leave this place till you have done so. There, man, take the ring; it might have been yours by right."

Owen took the ring and placed it on his finger.

"If we ever again meet, however much changed you may be, I shall know you by that," said O'Harrall. "Now, farewell—may a happier fate be yours than will probably be my lot!"

"Stay a moment, and I will ascertain that no one is near," said Owen, as O'Harrall was about to descend the ladder. He hid the lantern, and went out into the open part of the garden and round to the front of the house. Clouds obscured the stars; not a sound was to be heard, except the voice of some bird of night, which came from a distance. By some it might have been thought of ill omen, but Owen was above the superstitions of the ignorant. He returned to the outhouse, and in a low voice called to O'Harrall, who immediately descended the ladder.

"I feel sure that no one is on the watch," said Owen, "and it may be most prudent for you to get away at once."

"You are right," answered O'Harrall. "Again farewell, Massey; though we may never more see each other, I shall always remember that I have met with one honest and generous man."

He did not, however, put out his hand, perhaps supposing that Massey would consider himself contaminated by touching it.

"Go into your house," he continued, "and let me follow my own course, that you may not even know what direction I have taken."

Owen did as he was advised, leaving O'Harrall standing beneath the shelter of the buildings. Closing the door he returned to his room, when on looking out of his window, he found that O'Harrall had disappeared. His mind felt greatly relieved at the thought that he was no longer harbouring a fugitive from justice. On going into the garden the next morning, he could perceive no traces by which it might perchance be discovered that O'Harrall had been there, and he determined that the

occurrence should be known only to his mother and himself. He considered that it would be wrong to conceal it from her, and, sitting down, he told her what he had done. She did not speak for a minute or more.

"You acted rightly, my son," she said at length. "The O'Harralls have been our bitter enemies, but our holy religion teaches us that we should not only forgive our foes, but do good to those who most cruelly ill-treat and abuse us; whatever man may say, God will approve of your act, for he knows the motive which prompted you."

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## Chapter Eight.

**Arrival of the Champion—Mr Ferris goes on board—Brings back Lieutenant Foley wounded—Gerald joins the Champion as midshipman—An account of his shipmates—The Champion sails—Captain Tracy and Norah at home—The Ouzel Galley preparing for sea—Return of the Champion—Sails again—Owen appointed to the command of the Ouzel Galley—Mr Ferris and Ellen go to Dublin—The Ouzel Galley sails—Norah's life at home—Mr Ferris intends to go to Jamaica—The Ouzel Galley comes back, and Captain Tracy resolves to go round in her to Dublin.**

"News, Norah! I bring you news, Miss Ellen," cried Gerald, rushing into the drawing-room where his sister and her friend were seated. "I have just heard that a man-of-war has brought up inside the harbour, with her main-topmast gone and her sails riddled with shot. They say that she is the *Champion*, and that she has had a desperate action with a French ship, which she sent to the bottom, or which got away from her. Which was the case, I can't exactly make out, but she has lost I don't know how many officers and seamen, for there hasn't been such a bloody fight since the war began. The wounded, I hear, are to be sent on shore, and we shall thus, I suppose, know all about the matter."

Ellen turned pale as Gerald was speaking. "Have you heard who the killed and wounded are?" she asked, in a trembling voice.

"No; I could only learn the name of the ship, and that there has been a sharp action there can be no doubt," answered Gerald.

"Perhaps Gerald's account is exaggerated," remarked Norah, observing Ellen's agitation. "If the ship is the *Champion*, Mr Ferris is sure to go down and visit her; he will ascertain the truth of the report."

"I must—I must go and tell him what has happened, in case he should not have heard it," said Ellen, rising. She found Mr Ferris in his counting-house, on the ground-floor. He immediately ordered his boat, and telling Ellen that, should he find any wounded officers who might require to be cared for on shore, he would bring them up, he desired her to make preparations for their reception. Gerald, who was on the look-out for him, begged that he might accompany him on board. The boat, with six stout hands, rapidly made her way down the river.

Ellen and Norah, like good housewives, lost no time in seeing the spare rooms got ready for their expected guests. The occupation tended to relieve Ellen's mind.

"Perhaps, after all, there may be no wounded officers," said Norah. "Gerald's account was very vague—people nearly always exaggerate disasters."

"But I saw the beginning of the battle, and heard the dreadful guns firing—and some of those on board may have been killed," said Ellen, scarcely able to restrain her feelings.

The young ladies had some time to wait after the rooms had been got ready. Ellen was constantly going to the window, from which she could see the river and watch for the return of the boat. Norah, like a faithful friend, did not quit her.

"There comes the boat," exclaimed Ellen, at length. "Oh, see, Norah! there is a person wrapped up in blankets lying in the stern-sheets; my heart told me that he would be wounded."

"It is better so than had your heart told you he would be killed, and it had proved a true prophet," said Norah, smiling and trying to cheer up her friend. Ellen would have hurried down to the quay, but Norah persuaded her to remain at home. "He may not be Lieutenant Foley, remember," observed Norah, quietly; "and if he is, you are more likely to agitate him than to do him any good by rushing down to the quay. Think how odd it would look were you to exhibit your feelings in public, or, still more so, should the wounded man prove to be a stranger."

Norah's sensible remarks prevailed in inducing Ellen to remain quiet till the arrival of the party in the boat. Mr Ferris was the first person who appeared.

"You must not be alarmed, my dear child," he said. "There has been a fierce engagement, in which two officers and several men were killed—"

"Oh, father, who were they?" cried Ellen.

"A master's mate and a midshipman," answered Mr Ferris; "but I am sorry to say that Mr Foley was among the most severely wounded, and he gladly accepted my offer to take him on shore; so I brought him up here, and you and Norah will, I am sure, do your best to look after him."

While Mr Ferris was speaking, the men bearing the wounded lieutenant arrived. Ellen, restraining her feelings, received him with becoming propriety, though his pale lips and wan cheek made her heart sink. He was forthwith conveyed to the room which, had been prepared for him. Dr Roach, who had been an army surgeon, and knew well how to treat gunshot wounds of every description, was immediately sent for, and the young officer was placed under his charge.

"We'll pull him through, young lady," he observed, after he had visited his patient. "You will naturally wish to know what I think of the case of this fine young officer, who has been bleeding for his country. You need be under no serious apprehensions; he will be fit for duty again shortly. You saw how quickly I doctored up Mr Massey, in whom, if I am not wrongly informed, Miss Norah here takes an interest."

Norah looked conscious. "Young people have hearts, and small blame to them if they fall in love now and then," remarked the doctor; "and now, my pretty maidens, good-bye to you, for I want to hear more about the battle. I could not let my patient tell me. Remember, I leave him under your charge, but I must lay an embargo on your tongues; talking, or listening to talking, isn't good for wounded men, though you may sing him to sleep with your sweet voices."

Owen was well enough to accompany Mrs Massey when she returned Norah's visit, and, moreover, to stroll with her into the garden. He now first heard of O'Harrall's conduct; his brow flushed as she told him, but he restrained his feelings, and did not let even her know that he had assisted his rival's escape.



"Could the fellow have been aware that she was my betrothed wife, and yet, after such conduct, ventured to claim my protection? I am thankful I did not then know of his behaviour; I might have been tempted to refuse him my aid." Such were the thoughts which passed through Owen's mind. "However, bold as he is, he is not likely again to appear in this neighbourhood."

Owen and Norah, having each other's society, forgot how the time went by, till Gerald came hurrying up to call them into the house. He had just returned from his visit to the *Champion*; he was full of what he had heard of her engagement with the *Coquille*. Two officers had been killed, and two, besides Mr Foley, wounded; three men had been killed, and several wounded. The Frenchman, instead of being sent to the bottom, having knocked away the *Champion's* main-topmast and cut up her rigging, had managed to get off and run out of sight before her damages could be repaired. Captain Olding had chased in the direction the *Coquille* had last been seen, but had failed to come up with her, and was compelled to steer for Waterford.

"And, do you know, Norah," continued Gerald, "I've made up my mind to go on board a man-of-war. They all say that Captain Olding will take me, and place me on the quarter-deck, if Mr Ferris introduces me and would say a word in my favour; so if our father approves of it, I hope to go at once, instead of waiting for the *Ouzel Galley*."

"If it would better promote your fortune to serve on board a man-of-war, I will not hinder you," said Owen, as they walked towards the house.

"I would rather you should remain on board the dear old ship, to act as Owen's mate," observed Norah; "but if our father allows you to go on board the *Champion*, neither will I try to alter your determination."

Captain Olding had come up to the house to inquire after his lieutenant. He and Captain Tracy had been shipmates in their younger days. He was well pleased, he said, to be able to forward the views of his friend's son. It was therefore settled that Gerald should join the *Champion* at once, and Norah was busy from morning till night in preparing his outfit. Captain Tracy was now able to get about, and even to superintend the repairs of the *Ouzel Galley*. He secretly was somewhat proud of having a son belonging to the Royal Navy. It was the road to honour and fame; Gerald might some day become one of England's admirals. Still, had the captain intended to continue

at sea himself, he would have wished to keep his boy with him, and he would also gladly have had him accompany Owen Massey. Gerald himself was in high glee; he made frequent trips down to the *Champion*, and always came back with some fresh account of what she had done, and of what his future messmates, the midshipmen, fully expected she would do. He described them to Norah as first-rate, jolly fellows, up to all sorts of fun.

"And you may tell Miss Ferris, if you like," he added, "that they all say there isn't a more gallant officer in the service than Lieutenant Foley, and they hope that he'll soon get well and rejoin the ship. They don't speak quite so favourably of her first lieutenant, Jonah Tarwig, who seems as if he had swallowed the mizen-royal-mast as he was looking aloft one stormy night when the ship was taken aback and it was carried away. He is six feet two in height—how he manages to stow himself in his berth it is hard to say, but it is supposed that he doubles his legs back, for as to coiling away his body, that would be impossible. The master, old Billhook, is a rough diamond, but he understands navigation, and spins tough yarns by the score; I'll tell you some of them one of these days. The purser, Simon Cheeseparings—that isn't his real name—was a slopseller in Wapping, but outran his creditors and had to come to sea to escape from Newgate; and the doctor's a Scotchman whose name begins with Mac, and for brevity's sake Mac he is always called. Now you know all about the gun-room officers; but the best fellows, out and out, are in our berth. We've got two old mates, Beater and Crowhurst—at least, they are old compared to the rest of us, and they are always complaining that they are not port-admirals. Their characters answer to their names, for Beater is never without a cob in his hand, and he uses it pretty freely; and Crowhurst is always boasting of his own mighty deeds or those of his ancestors—and if you are to take his word for it, they (his ancestors, I mean) came over with William the Conqueror, and ought to be dukes at the least. However, putting their peculiarities aside, they're capital fellows, and, if they have an opportunity, will show that they have the true metal in them—so my chum, Nat Kiddle, says. He doesn't pretend to be anybody, though I can tell you he's a broth of a boy, and it's a pity he wasn't an Irishman, for he'd do honour to the old country; but he happens to be the tenth son of an English farmer, whose brother was a lieutenant in the navy, and took him to sea, but his uncle having been killed at the end of the last war, Nat has to shift for himself. Though he has tumbled into a good many scrapes, he has always managed to fall on his feet. Then we've got a young lord, Mountstephen; he

is always called Molly, but he doesn't at all mind, and declares that he'll some day show the Frenchmen what an English Molly can do. In reality, he is the pet of the mess—not because he's a lord, but because he's a very nice little fellow, who looks as if he ought to be in the nursery instead of knocking about in a sloop of war. But I don't know, Norah, whether you'll care to hear about the rest of us."

"Oh yes," answered Norah; "I am very much interested, especially in the little lord. I hope you'll help to take care of him."

"Yes, that you may depend on it I will," said Gerald; "if I get into scrapes, I'll take care he doesn't—though I don't intend to get into any myself, notwithstanding that they say Irishmen always do. They've dubbed me Paddy already, but of course I'm proud of that, and shall always stick up for old Ireland, and sing 'Erin-go-bragh' on all occasions. Well, I'll tell you about the rest of our mess another day, and something about the warrant officers. We've three of them, the gunner, boatswain, and carpenter—and as chance will have it, the first is a Scotchman, the second an Englishman, and the third an Irishman; and though they're mighty good friends, they are always wrangling about their respective countries, each one declaring his own to be superior to the others in every respect. Barney O'Rourke hailed me at once as a countryman, and was mighty pleased to see one young gentleman, at least, from the Emerald Isle who would stick up for our country's honour. 'And, by my faith, that's what I intend to do,' I answered—and we became sworn friends. There now, Norah, I think you know a good deal about our ship already, and when Lieutenant Foley gets about again, which I hope he'll do in a few days, you will learn a good deal more; and when we're away, you'll be able to fancy me on board among my shipmates."

Norah sighed as she thought how soon her young brother, who had never before been parted from her, would be away, with the chance of not coming back for three or four years, for the *Champion* had only lately been commissioned, and might before long be sent to a foreign station. At length Captain Olding, the *Champion* being ready for sea, ordered Gerald on board to perform duty as a midshipman. He intended, however, to return in the course of two or three weeks, expecting by that time that his second lieutenant would be sufficiently recovered to resume his duties. Norah accompanied her father and Owen down the river to wish Gerald good-bye, and to see the ship sail. She felt rather sad as the boat shoved off, when the anchor

was apeak and the white canvas let fall, and the ship began to glide majestically away through the calm waters of the harbour—for, besides that she grieved to part with her young brother, the thought occurred to her that the *Ouzel Galley* would be the next ship she should see taking her departure from port. Owen, who was now able to be constantly with her, offered, not unsuccessfully, all the consolation in his power. Captain Tracy, being now well enough to go about, removed with her to their own cottage, situated a short distance from Waterford, and within a mile of Mrs Massey's abode. It was a pretty spot. The cottage, with its porch covered with clematis and eglantine, stood in a good garden in which the captain delighted to work during his leisure hours. From the windows could be seen the broad, shining river and the shipping in the distance on one side, and from the other the mountainous regions to the westward. Altogether, no young lady could have desired a more romantic bower.

The captain, by his successful voyages, had been able to save a sufficient sum to live in comfort, with a handmaiden, Biddy O'Halloran, to attend on him and his daughter, and a gessoon to look after the cows and pigs and to work in the garden. Still, notwithstanding her present happiness, it was but natural that poor Norah should reflect that in a short time Owen must sail away in command of the *Ouzel Galley*, and be subject to all the dangers of the sea, increased in war time by the chance of being captured by the enemy. He and her father were now absent all day long, attending to the fitting out of the ship, which was making rapid progress. Her owners had decided on sending her back to the West Indies, and Owen assured Norah that, as he should probably find a cargo waiting for him, he should not be long absent. She paid frequent visits to Ellen, who could heartily sympathise with her. Lieutenant Foley had entirely recovered from his wound, and would have to rejoin the *Champion* as soon as she arrived in the harbour, in which she was every day expected. Norah thought that the lieutenant deserved all the praises bestowed on him by Gerald, though of course he was not equal, in her estimation, to Owen. Still, she could not be surprised that her friend had given him her heart, especially as he had owned that he had given his to Ellen; and they were now regularly betrothed with the full approval of Mr Ferris, and were to marry as soon as Mr Foley had obtained the rank of commander.

The days and weeks went rapidly by. Mr Ferris intended, as soon as Lieutenant Foley had joined his ship, to return with his daughter to Dublin. This would be a great loss to Norah, as she

was acquainted with but few other young ladies in the neighbourhood; indeed, from having been at school with Ellen, they were more like sisters than ordinary friends. Ellen had begged that she would visit her in Dublin, but she could not leave her father, and still less did she wish to quit Waterford till the *Ouzel Galley* had sailed; after that, she felt that she should have no spirit to enjoy the gay society of the metropolis, even should her father insist on her accepting Ellen's invitation.

The arrival of the *Champion* was announced at last by Gerald, who early one morning rushed into the house.

"We came in last night, and are to sail again this evening, so I obtained leave to run up to see you," cried Gerald. "I've got lots to tell you," he continued, after he had exchanged greetings with his father and sister, and was seated at the breakfast-table. "We haven't had any actual fight, but we've taken several prizes, one of them, as big as the *Champion*, cut out in gallant style. She was seen at anchor in Saint Martin's Roads, and the captain determined to have her. We stood away, and the Frenchman must have supposed we had gone; but at night, when it was very dark, we stood back again. Three boats were then lowered, and I had the good luck to be sent in one of them. We at once pulled away for the roads with muffled oars. There lay the ship right ahead of us; we could just see her masts against the sky. The Frenchmen must have been all asleep, or keeping a very bad look-out, for we were alongside and our fellows almost on her deck before we were discovered. The Frenchmen, thus taken by surprise, made but a very feeble resistance, and though a few of them were knocked over, we didn't lose a man. The cable was cut and the topsails sheeted home before the fort began to fire, and as the wind was off shore, we got out of range with very little damage. We earned our prize into Plymouth, and our captain, I believe, gained some credit for his exploit; though except that he designed it, he took no part, for old Tarwig commanded one boat, and the master, Billhook, another, and one of our mates and I went in the third. Had half of us been killed, I suppose more would have been thought of the affair. While at Plymouth we heard from the bumboat women, who have always the most correct intelligence, that we were to be sent to the West Indies, and we soon found that they were right; but the captain got leave to come in here first, to take Lieutenant Foley on board, and to obtain fresh provisions; so I shall be visiting the old scenes again, and, I hope, fall in with Owen. That will be good fun; perhaps we shall have to convoy him home, or maybe, should

the *Ouzel Galley* fall into the hands of the enemy, retake the ship. Faith, shouldn't I be delighted."

"Oh, don't talk of such a dreadful thing!" exclaimed Norah. "I hope that you may have to convoy him home, and that we may see you both back here in five or six months."

Gerald could stay but a very short time, as he had been ordered to return on board with Lieutenant Foley. Norah and Captain Tracy accompanied him into Waterford. They found the lieutenant ready to start, and Norah remained with Ellen, who had just taken farewell of her intended husband. Owen, having joined the captain and Norah, went down to the quay to see Gerald off.

"We shall meet, I hope, soon, Owen," said the young midshipman. "I feel half ashamed of myself for deserting you; but if you knew the life we lead on board the *Champion*, you wouldn't be surprised at my preferring her to the dear old *Galley*."

"The time may come when you may think differently. But good-bye, my lad; I hope you will enjoy yourself and come back safe," answered Owen, as Gerald sprang on board.

The lieutenant gazed with eager eyes towards the windows of the large house overlooking the river, where he could see a white handkerchief waving to him. Two or three more years might pass before he could again press the hand lately clasped in his, and it was a hard matter for him just then to keep up his spirits. Soon after the boat returned on board, the anchor was hove up, and the *Champion*, under all sail, stood to the south-west.

In the evening Mr Ferris desired to see Owen. "My partners and I have given you charge of the *Ouzel Galley*, Captain Massey, and we trust that you will be as devoted to our interests as your predecessor has been," he said, giving Owen for the first time the title of captain. "Having undergone a thorough refit, we hope that she will require no fresh repairs for some time to come. We intend to insure her among our friends in Dublin, and they, knowing her good qualities and your careful character, would be ready to underwrite her at a moderate premium considering the war risk."

"You may rely on my taking the best care I possibly can of the ship," answered Owen, "and, as she has (I may say it without

fear) a fair pair of heels, on my keeping clear of every enemy I may sight."

"That is what we wish, Mr Massey," said Mr Ferris. "We don't want men who will run their noses into danger; and true courage and seamanship will best be shown in your case by cleverly escaping from your foes. You will get the ship ready for sea as soon as possible, and take your cargo on board, and we will then send you further directions from Dublin."

Owen took leave of his employer and returned home. The next day Mr Ferris, accompanied by Ellen, proceeded to Dublin.

Norah's day of trial came at length. She ought not to have complained, as she had enjoyed Owen's society for some months. The *Ouzel Galley* having shipped her cargo, chiefly of salt provisions, and other produce of the fertile south of Ireland, hauled out into the stream. Her old captain, with Norah and Mrs Massey, went on board to bid farewell to Owen, and proceeded down the river till she had crossed the bar, when Captain Tracy took Owen by the hand.

"Heaven speed you, my boy!" he said. "May He who guarded me through the many dangers of the ocean take care of you, and bring you back in safety to those who will ever give you a loving welcome! And now, the shorter you cut the parting with those two the better."

Mrs Massey saw that the time had come; she threw her arms round the young captain's neck, and asked God again and again to protect him. Then she let Norah take her place, while Captain Tracy helped her down into the boat alongside, in which Owen soon afterwards placed Norah. They had said their last words of farewell; Norah's had been whispered, for her heart was too full to allow her to utter them aloud. Captain Tracy took his seat in the stern-sheets. "Cast off!" he cried to the bowman. The boat dropped astern; Owen was seen standing aft and looking over the taffrail; the pilot, who had still the command, ordered the courses to be let fall, and the *Ouzel Galley* glided onward. As long as the boat was in sight, there stood Owen gazing at Norah and his mother, as again and again they waved. More than once the old captain turned round to take another look at the ship whose keel he had seen laid, each timber and plank of which he had carefully watched as the shipwrights had fixed them in their destined positions—that ship on the deck of which he had stood when she glided into the water for the first time, and which he had since navigated with watchful care on every voyage she had

made, amid rocks and shoals, and over many a league of ocean.

Mrs Massey had consented to spend a few days with Norah. Though her own heart was heavy, she knew that she could console that of the young girl, so unused to the trials of life; while the old captain himself, she saw, required cheering, and thus in benefiting others she forgot her own anxieties. The captain had out his chart: he had marked the way the wind blew, and knew to a nicety the rate at which the ship was sailing, and could thus calculate from hour to hour the exact spot on which she floated—always provided, as he observed, if the wind holds as it did when she quitted port.

At length Mrs Massey returned home, and Norah settled down to her daily occupations. Norah was not free from some anxiety on her own account, for she could not forget the attempt which had been made to carry her off, or divest herself altogether of the fear that she might be subjected to a similar outrage. She therefore never ventured abroad without her father's escort, while he at home ever kept his firearms ready for her defence. Still, as week after week went by, her hope that O'Harrall had quitted the country, and that he would not again venture to molest her, increased. She heard occasionally from Ellen, though letters were long in coming, and more than once the mail had been stopped on the road and plundered—a too frequent occurrence to be thought much of in those days.

Norah, notwithstanding her fears, was unmolested. The captain had given out that if any one should venture to run off with his daughter he would not obtain a farthing of his property—a wise precaution, for it probably prevented any of the squireens in the neighbourhood from making the attempt—added to the fact, which was pretty generally known, that she was engaged to marry Owen Massey.

Month after month went by. Ellen at first wrote her word that she was going much into society—more, indeed, than she liked—while she had an abundance of occupation at home in attending to her father's household. Latterly, from her letters, she appeared to be living a more quiet life than at first. She mentioned her father, who seemed to be much out of spirits, though she could not divine the cause. She again invited Norah to come up to Dublin and help to cheer him up.

"You are a great favourite of his, you know," she wrote. "He delights in hearing you sing, and your merry laugh and conversation will do him good."



But Norah could not be induced to leave her father; besides which, she confessed to Ellen, she was looking forward in a short time to the return of the *Ouzel Galley*, and she would be sorry if Owen should not find her at home on his arrival. Ellen, in reply, told her that the *Ouzel Galley*, after calling at Waterford, would probably have to come on to Dublin, and she continued—"And my father, finding it necessary to go out to Jamaica, intends taking a passage in her; and I have determined to obtain leave to accompany him. I fear that he will object to my doing so, on account of the danger to which I may be exposed; but, you know, as I generally manage to have my own way, I hope to overcome his objections. The ship also will form one of a large fleet of merchantmen under convoy of two or three men-of-war, and as the *Ouzel Galley* sails well, even should the convoy be attacked by the enemy, we shall have every chance of getting off. You must not be jealous of me, my dear Norah; indeed, I heartily wish that your father could spare you to bear me company; and I dare say that the young captain would wish the same, did he know of the proposed plan. Pray tell him of it when he comes into Waterford, and I have an idea that he will join his persuasions with mine."

This letter made Norah's heart beat quickly. She was much surprised, too, at hearing of the intention of Mr Ferris to go out to the West Indies; but, much as she would have liked to accompany her friend, she felt that it would be impossible to leave her father.

"I was afraid that things were not going on straight," observed Captain Tracy, when she told him of the news she had received. "However, Mr Ferris is the man to set them to rights, and he'll do it; but I wish that Miss Ellen, instead of going out with him, would come and stay here. She expects to meet the lieutenant, but he'll be here, there, and everywhere, and she mayn't see him all the time she is there."

Norah, in reply, told Ellen what Captain Tracy had said; but Miss Ferris had made up her mind to go if she could, and was not to be deterred from her purpose. One evening Norah was seated at the open window with her work before her, while her father occupied his usual armchair, smoking his pipe, when a rapid step was heard approaching the house. Norah uttered a cry of delight, and, hurrying to the door, the next moment was in Owen Massey's arms.

"I am glad to see you back, my lad," cried the old captain, grasping his hand; "you've made a quick voyage, and a prosperous one, I hope?"

"As prosperous as I could desire," answered Owen. "We have had two or three narrow escapes from the enemy's cruisers, but the *Ouzel Galley* is in good trim, and never sailed better. I heard in Waterford that I am to proceed to Dublin," he continued; "so I paid my mother a visit, and she bade me hurry on here. I can remain but a short time, for I must be on board again early to-morrow."

"We'll make the most of you, then, my lad," said Captain Tracy, "and Norah looks as if she intended to do so."

She was the first to tell Owen of the intention of Mr Ferris to go out in the *Ouzel Galley* to Jamaica, and that Ellen had made up her mind to accompany him. "She has asked me to pay her a visit before she goes," she added, "and I should much like to do so could I leave my father, but that I cannot do."

"Nor shall you, my girl, for I will go with you," said the captain, who had overheard her remark. "We'll go in the *Ouzel Galley*—to my mind there's less danger at sea than from those land pirates, the highwaymen—and if you can pack up your traps in time, we'll go aboard to-morrow morning. What say you, Owen? Will you take us as passengers?"

Owen expressed his pleasure at the proposal, and Norah had no doubt that she could pack up in time. Owen put aside all fears of capture by the enemy; indeed, the Channel was so well guarded by British ships of war that there was little danger, he thought, on that score. He had too much confidence in his own seamanship to think of shipwreck. After all arrangements had been made, he went back to spend the rest of the evening with his mother, while Norah and the captain, with Biddy's help, prepared for their departure.

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## Chapter Nine.

**The Ouzel Galley sails for Dublin—A strange sail to the southward—Follows the Ouzel Galley—The Champion sends Mr Foley and Gerald to press some of her men—Norah in Dublin—Mr Foley and Gerald in command of a pressgang—An adventure on the Liberties—A suspicious character captured—Pressed men carried off—Ellen and Mr Ferris sail in the Ouzel Galley—Captain Tracy and Norah return to Waterford—The Ouzel Galley with the convoy bound for the**

## **West Indies—Sharp action with French frigates—The enemy beaten off.**

Norah and Captain Tracy were on board the *Ouzel Galley* before noon the next day, accompanied by Owen. They had gone round to bid Mrs Massey good-bye; it cost her much to part again so soon with her son, but she was proud of seeing him captain of so fine a ship, and had learnt to bear many trials with fortitude.

As the breeze blew up the harbour, the *Ouzel Galley* had to beat out, which, with a favourable tide, she succeeded in doing in a few tacks, after which she had a fair wind for Dublin. Dan, coming aft, hat in hand, welcomed Miss Norah, and wished she was going to sail with them the next voyage—Pompey, who presumed on long service with Captain Massey, imitating his example, and making an appropriate speech. Norah thanked them, and, it is just possible, secretly wished that she was to remain on board.

A bright look-out was kept for any sail which might heave in sight; for, though Owen believed that there was no risk of encountering an enemy, it was still possible that a French privateer might be on the watch to pick up any merchant vessel which might come within her grasp. The wind fell, and the *Ouzel Galley* made but little progress during the night. Whatever others might have done, Norah did not complain; she was in no hurry to have the trip over. Dawn had just broken, when, as a mist which had for some hours hung over the ocean began to clear away, a hand who had been sent aloft shouted out, "A sail to the southward!" Owen, who was on deck, at once went to the mast-head to take a look at the stranger. She was a large ship under all sail, but the mist prevented him from making out very clearly what she was.

"She is bringing up the breeze," observed Captain Massey, when he returned on deck; "but as we shall probably get it before long, we may keep ahead of her."

"We'll try our best to do that same," said the old captain; "it would be hard to be trapped just as we are going into port."

"I should never forgive myself for having allowed you and Norah to come on board," said Owen, feeling much more anxious than he would have done had he been alone.

"Don't trouble yourself about that, lad," answered the captain; "she is more likely to be a British ship than a Frenchman, and she hasn't got up to us yet, nor will she, I trust, before we are safe in the Liffey. I shall be glad, however, when we get the breeze."

They had not long to wait before cat's-paws were seen playing over the surface of the ocean. The sails were trimmed, and the ship began to glide through the water; faster and faster she moved, but the stranger astern still gained on her. Norah soon followed her father on deck, and the rising sun shining on the white canvas of the ship astern revealed her more clearly to view.

"Is that ship chasing us?" she asked, with a little trepidation in her voice.

"She is following in our wake, but she may be a friend for all that," answered Owen, anxious not to alarm Norah. "Should she prove to be a foe, we'll do our best to keep ahead of her. Fortunately, we have a port to run for, and have every chance of gaining it before she comes up with us. See, we have the Wicklow mountains already in sight, and it will not take us many hours to reach Dublin if the wind holds as it does now."

"I quite agree with you, Owen; we have very little cause to fear, go we'll go below and take our breakfasts with good appetite," said the captain, the steward having just announced that the meal was ready.

On returning on deck they could perceive no change in the relative position of the vessels; but as the day drew on the wind dropped, and the stranger appeared to gain on them. Still they made some way, and could distinguish the Round Tower and ruined house on Dalkey Island, off the Wicklow coast, when it fell perfectly calm, and though the Bay of Dublin was almost in sight, they were unable to reach it. The old captain took many a glance through his spy-glass at the ship astern.

"She looks more like an English man-of-war than a Frenchman," he said to Owen; "see what you make of her."

"I agree with you, sir," said Owen. "She is standing after us simply because she is bound to the same port, and if so, we need not trouble ourselves further about her; anyway, we shall be safe at anchor before long, and an enemy would scarcely venture into the bay to cut us out."

Still Owen, not being altogether free from anxiety, walked the deck the greater part of the night, waiting for a breeze. It came at length, towards the end of the middle watch, and as before, astern. He had lost sight of the stranger during the hours of darkness, but when dawn broke, as the *Ouzel Galley* was off Kingstown, he saw her coming up rapidly not a mile away. With the increasing daylight he made her out, however, to be undoubtedly a British man-of-war.

"No mistake as to that point," observed Captain Tracy, who joined him on deck; "I thought so from the first."

What was their astonishment, therefore, when the corvette fired a gun towards them. The *Ouzel Galley* still stood on, when the sound of another gun came booming over the calm sea.

"It is the signal to us to heave to. We must obey," said Owen; "though they perhaps think that we are too strong-handed, and wish to press some of our men."

"There's no help for it," observed the old captain; "better at the end of a voyage than the beginning of one, as far as the owners are concerned; but it is a cruel thing for the poor men to be carried away from their families just as they are expecting to get home."

The yards were braced up, and the ship hove to. In a short time the corvette, getting abreast of her, lowered a boat and quickly pulled alongside, with a lieutenant and midshipman in her. As they sprang on deck, the latter came running aft.

"Don't you know me, father?" he exclaimed, as he got up to Captain Tracy.

"What, Gerald, my boy! You've grown so tall and brown that, thinking you away in the West Indies, I didn't till this moment," answered Captain Tracy.

"But I thought it was he," cried Norah, as Gerald bestowed on her a brotherly embrace. He then shook hands with Owen, to whom Lieutenant Foley, who was the other officer, had at first addressed himself; but, seeing Norah, he advanced and paid his respects, inquiring for her friend Miss Ferris.

"She is well, and about to sail for Jamaica on board this vessel," answered Norah. "You will, if you land at Dublin, have an opportunity of seeing her."

"I hope, then, that the *Ouzel Galley* will form one of the next fleet which we have received orders to convoy to the West Indies," said Lieutenant Foley. "Having been sent home with despatches, we landed at Plymouth, and were on our way round here when we ran out of our course in chase of a strange sail. She, however, escaped us, and we are now bound into Dublin Bay. Are you going to remain on board?" he asked.

"I am afraid not," said Norah; "but I am sure that it will be satisfactory to Mr Ferris to learn that your ship will convoy them. Should I see them before you do, I will tell them so."

Thereon the lieutenant sent several messages to Ellen, which Norah promised to deliver, as duty might possibly delay him from going on shore. He then turned to Owen.

"I was sent to press some of the hands out of your ship," he said, "but if you are about again to sail, I feel authorised to take only those who have not agreed to return with you; and I must beg you to muster your crew."

Whatever might have been the intentions of the men, they one and all agreed to re-enter for the next voyage on board the *Ouzel Galley*, and Owen thus secured an experienced crew instead of the untried hands he might afterwards have picked up.

"It is fortunate that you fell in with us instead of any other man-of-war, or you would have lost your best hands," said Gerald; "and we, I suspect, shall have to send pressgangs on shore to pick up all the fellows we can find. You had better give a hint to your men not to trust themselves out of the ship, for all would be fish who come to our net, they may depend on that."

Gerald had to return with Lieutenant Foley to the *Champion*, while the *Ouzel Galley*, having taken a pilot on board, at once ran up the harbour, when Norah and her father proceeded to Mr Ferris's. The arrival of the *Ouzel Galley* was hailed with great satisfaction by Mr Ferris; still more so was the news Norah gave Ellen, that the *Champion* was one of the ships of war appointed to convoy the *Ouzel Galley* and the other merchant vessels to the West Indies. All diligence was used in discharging her cargo and taking a fresh one on board; and in shorter time than usual, thanks to the assistance rendered by her old captain, she was ready for sea. Owen had the happiness of spending the evenings with Norah, and Ellen was the better able to dispense with her society as Lieutenant Foley managed frequently to get on shore, bringing Gerald with him. Their time, however, was

not always passed so agreeably, as they had on several occasions to take charge of the pressgangs sent on shore to pick up men, and more than once they were engaged in pretty severe encounters with the unwilling seamen whom it was their duty to capture.

Mr Foley and the young midshipman were spending the evening at Mr Ferris's, when they were summoned out.

"We must wish you good night," said the lieutenant to Ellen, returning; "we have some duty to attend to, and shall afterwards have to go on board our ship."

The ladies came into the hall, and were somewhat astonished at the garb which the two officers quickly assumed. Over their neat uniforms they put on large Flushing trousers, thick coats of the same material buttoned up to their throats, round which they tied large comforters, while on their heads they wore weather-beaten sou'-westers. A cutlass, buckled on by a leathern belt in which a brace of pistols were stuck, showed that they were about to proceed on an expedition in which rough play might be expected.

"Where are you going?" asked Ellen, in some trepidation.

"Only to obtain a few loyal seamen to serve his Majesty," answered the lieutenant. "The fellows don't know their true interests, and may perhaps offer some opposition; but don't be alarmed—we hope to be on shore to-morrow to give a good account of ourselves."

The lieutenant and midshipman set off under the guidance of the captain's coxswain, a Dublin man, who had come for them. Proceeding to a public-house on one of the lower quays, they found a dozen seamen dressed and armed as they were. The lieutenant having given them directions, they followed him and his guide to that part of Dublin known as the "Liberties," inhabited by the dregs of the population. The night was dark; no lamps illumined that part of the town. The lantern carried by Larry Flynn, the coxswain, enabled the party to thread their way through several narrow streets till they reached a house, at the door of which he stopped.

"This is it, yer honour," said Larry; "but we must be mighty quick, or they'll be after escaping along the tiles."

On this he gave a gentle knock at the door. "Hist! Mother O'Flanigan, open the door, or I'll be taken hold of by the

watchmen," he whispered through the keyhole, as he heard a step within.

"Who is it?" asked the voice.

"Shure, it's Dennis Donovan, whom ye'll be after knowing, I'm thinking; but quick, quick, mother dear, or it'll be too late and I'll be caught."

As he spoke the bars were withdrawn, and the lock turned, and the old woman, forgetting her usual caution, slowly opened the door. On this Larry sprang in, and before she had time to shriek out thrust a woollen comforter into her mouth.

"Hold her fast, Bill!" he exclaimed to one of the men who had been directed to guard the door, while the lieutenant and Gerald, with the rest, rushed along a narrow passage, at the end of which another female, a stout, sturdy-looking Amazon, appeared with a light in one hand and a poker in the other.

"Who are ye, ye brutes?" she exclaimed, "coming to disturb a dacent household at this time of night? Shure, the childher are in bed, and ye'll be waking them up and sending them into fits, the darlints."

"It's joking ye are, Misthress Milligan, for divil a child have ye got in the house, barring a score of bhoys with big whiskers on their faces," answered Larry; "so just keep a dacent tongue in your mouth, and be quiet with that poker."

Mrs Milligan, finding that she was known, and as it would be useless to deny that she had guests in the house, shrieked out at the top of her voice, "Run, bhoys, run—the pressgang are on ye!" at the same time attempting, with her formidable weapon, to prevent the seamen from opening the door before which she stood. Larry, however, dashing forward, wrenched it from her hand, and giving her a shove which sent her reeling into the arms of those behind him, burst open the door with his cudgel; and, the harridan having been handed along to those in the rear, the rest of the men followed him into the room. It was an apartment of some size. At one end was a table covered with mugs, a jug or two, and several bottles of large proportions, and surrounded by benches; while at the other end were four beds, each with a couple of occupants, who had endeavoured to conceal their features by the coverlets. Larry pointed to them, and he and his companions springing forward and drawing off the coverlets, brought to view eight fully clad seamen, who, offering no resistance, quietly submitted to their fate; though



sundry oaths and throats of vengeance showed that they believed themselves to be the victims of treachery.

"There are more of them stowed away above," exclaimed Larry; and, leaving the room, he sprang up a rickety stair.

"Who comes there?" cried a gruff voice from the top. The speaker had probably been aroused by the noises below. "You'll pay dear for it, whoever you are who attempt to interfere with me."

"Shure, Dick Rowan, your time has come at last to serve his Majesty, threaten and bluster as you like," cried Larry, as he and the rest continued their ascent.

"Take that!" cried the previous speaker, firing a pistol, the bullet whistling near Larry's ear, but striking in the wall behind him. Before he could draw another, Larry and the lieutenant threw themselves upon him, and in spite of his struggles dragged him downstairs. His shouts aroused several other men, who rushed out armed with bludgeons and pistols.

"Come up here at your peril," cried one of them, who appeared at the head of the stair, flourishing his bludgeon and holding a pistol in his left hand.

"It's not such orders from the like of you we've a mind to obey," said Larry, who having handed over the men just taken prisoners, was, with the lieutenant and Gerald, about to ascend the steps. Gerald was struck by the voice, and as Larry threw the light of his lantern before him, he recognised, as he believed, the features of Carnegan, the second mate of the *Ouzel Galley*—or rather O'Harrall, as he has been better known to the reader.

"Seize the ruffian," cried Gerald; "he is an escaped prisoner. I know him!" He sprang up the steps as he spoke, Mr Foley, Larry, and several of the men following.

"Take that for your knowledge, youngster," cried the man, firing his pistol; and finding that it had missed Gerald's head, though by a hair's breadth alone, he lifted his cudgel and would have effectually put an end to his young assailant, had not Larry interposed his cutlass, and, before the man could again raise his weapon, inflicted so severe a wound that he was compelled to drop it. The lieutenant and more seamen coming up threw themselves on him, and in spite of several other people who had come out, he also was secured. The rest retreated into the

room, but were pursued before they could make their escape from the windows, which they were attempting to do. One fellow was hauled back just as he had got outside, and in a short time every male inmate of the house was captured.

Rapid as the pressgang had been in their movements, the alarm had been given outside, and a mob was already collecting in the street, evidently with the intention of rescuing the prisoners. There was no time, therefore, to be lost. Mr Foley ordered his men to drag them out and hurry them along, each of the pressgang holding a pistol to the head of his prisoner. Larry had taken charge of the man whom Gerald supposed to be O'Harrall. The ruffian at first waited along quietly enough, but by the way he turned his head he was evidently on the watch for an opportunity of escaping.

"If ye attempt to do it, a bullet will go through yer head, as shure as ye're a living man," cried Larry, in a tone of voice which made the prisoner feel certain that he would be as good as his word. His escape would have been the signal for the rest to attempt breaking loose. Mr Foley and Gerald, with two of the men who had no prisoners to guard, brought up the rear, and had enough to do to keep the rapidly increasing mob at bay. It was mostly composed, however, of women and boys, who shrieked and shouted, and hurled abuse on the heads of the pressgang. By degrees, however, they were joined by several men carrying shillelaghs, but the strict enforcement of the law against the possession of firearms prevented the lower orders in the city from having them. Growing bolder as their numbers increased, and seeing that the pressgang was about to escape from their own especial domain, they made a furious attack on the rearguard, who could only keep them at bay by a free use of their cutlasses, with which several of the assailants were wounded. At length the lesson the mob received made them hold back, though they vented their rage in still louder execrations, howling as an Irish mob alone can howl.

"Not very pleasant work this, Tracy," observed Mr Foley to the midshipman. "However, as we've got thus far, I hope that we may succeed in conveying our prisoners to the boats."

"One of them, at all events, is likely to make further efforts to escape," said Gerald. "He is the very man, if I mistake not, who got out of the King Tower at Waterford, and even if we carry him on board, he is likely to prove a troublesome customer."

"We'll soon bring the most troublesome down to their proper bearings," answered the lieutenant. "If he is a good seaman, he'll answer our purpose."

"We haven't got him safe on board yet, sir, and if these fellows gathering round us show any pluck, we shall have a hard matter to keep him and the rest of the captured men," said Gerald, looking down the street, the few lights in which dimly showed a mass of people rushing forward, the shillelaghs of the men waving wildly above their heads.

"Go on ahead, Tracy, and urge Larry to move faster," said Mr Foley. "Do you keep your eye on his prisoner and see that he doesn't escape."

Gerald obeyed the order, and the seamen did their best to drag forward their captives by threats of blowing out their brains if they did not keep their feet stirring. Gerald was not mistaken as to the object of the crowd, though they had apparently intended to attack the head of his party; seeing them passing, they now came rushing on at greater speed than before.

"Stand back," cried the lieutenant, "or we'll fire; it will be your own fault if any of you are killed."

No regard, however, was paid to his threats. Some of the more daring of the crowd leaped forward, springing now on one side, now on the other, under the idea of escaping the bullets which might be fired at them. The lieutenant and his two men on this had begun to flourish their cutlasses, which in such an affray would be of far more use than pistols, and serve, as before, to keep their assailants from coming to close quarters; still, as they retreated the mob advanced, and every moment threatened to make a rush, when by their superior numbers they must have succeeded in overwhelming the lieutenant and his men and rescuing their prisoners. At this juncture a loud hurrah was heard, and a fresh body of seamen came hurrying along the street. The mob no sooner saw them than the greater number scampered off to a safe distance, where they gave vent to their feelings by uttering the most fearful howls and hurling maledictions on the heads of the pressgang; but the prisoners must have seen that all hope of escape was gone, for they now quietly submitted to their fate, and when they reached the quay stepped, as ordered, into the boats.

The man whom Gerald supposed to be O'Harrall was put into his boat. "We have met before," said Gerald, after they had pulled some little way down the river; "I wonder you don't know me."

"It must have been a long time ago, then, sir, for I haven't the slightest recollection of ever having set eyes on you," answered the man.

"What, were you never on board the *Ouzel Galley*?" asked Gerald.

"Never heard of her till a couple of days ago, when I saw her alongside the quay," was the reply.

"What, don't you know the name of Carnegan?" said Gerald.

"I may know it—but it isn't my name," answered the man.

"Then perhaps it is O'Harrall," said Gerald.

The man started. "How did you come to know that name?" he asked; adding quickly, "But that isn't my name either. If you want to know it, Michael Dillon is my name; and since I am to have the ill luck to be compelled to serve his Majesty afloat, I intend to show that it's one no man need be ashamed of."

"It is very extraordinary," thought Gerald. "This man's answers are so straightforward that I suppose I must have been mistaken." He did not further question the prisoner. The boats at length reached the ship, and the captives were sent below under a guard. Mr Foley, at Gerald's suggestion, gave orders that Dillon especially should be strictly watched, as should any of them leap overboard, they were sure to have friends waiting in readiness to pick them up.

This was only one of several expeditions made by the pressgang on shore, though none were so successful. On each occasion they were hooted by the mob; and not without reason, when husbands were torn from their wives, fathers from their children—several of those taken being either 'long-shore men or not even sailors—but men were wanted, and Captain Olding had been directed to get as many as he could pick up, to supply the other ships expected shortly to form the convoy of the fleet of merchantmen. Two frigates arrived a few days after this, and orders were issued to the merchant vessels to rendezvous in the bay. Every effort was made to get them ready, as those not prepared would probably have to wait for many months before another convoy would sail.

Ellen, as might have been expected, had gained her object, and her father had consented to her accompanying him on board the *Ouzel Galley*. It is as difficult to describe as to analyse the

feelings with which poor Norah parted with her. She was sorry to lose her friend; she felt a very natural jealousy of her—or, if it was not jealousy, she would thankfully have changed places. Still more gladly would she have gone with her—though not for a moment did an unworthy doubt of her friend, still less of Owen, enter into her mind. But notwithstanding this, even had the offer been made to her to go out with Ellen, she would not have deserted her father. When she and Captain Tracy stood on the deck of the *Ouzel Galley*, as the stout ship sailed out of harbour, she succeeded in maintaining her composure. Not, indeed, till the signal gun was fired for the fleet to get under way, and she and the captain had taken their seats in the boat to return to the shore, did she show any signs of the feelings which were agitating her.

“Cheer up, Norah,” said the old captain; “we’ll pray that they may have a prosperous voyage and speedy return, and it won’t be many months before we see the *Ouzel Galley* coming back trim as ever into Waterford Harbour. Owen will soon make his fortune with the favour of Mr Ferris; he is a favourite captain, that is evident, and the house can put many a chance in his way of turning an honest penny. Perhaps after next voyage the ship will be requiring another repair, and as Owen will then have to remain for some time on shore, he may think fit to make you his wife, and I’ll not object if he has your consent. I only wish Gerald were with him; the lad’s thrown a good chance away, but he was so bent on joining the Royal Navy that I hadn’t the heart to hinder him, though I might have been wiser to do so.”

Thus the old captain ran on, his remarks contributing not a little to calm his daughter’s feelings and to induce her to look forward hopefully to the future.

After spending a few days more in Dublin, the captain being employed in transacting some shipping business for the firm, he and Norah set off for Waterford, where, in spite of his apprehensions of being attacked by Rapparees, highwaymen, or abductors, they arrived in safety.

Meantime the *Ouzel Galley*, with about sixty other merchantmen collected from Liverpool, Glasgow, and various Irish ports, set sail down Channel, convoyed by the 32-gun frigates, *Thisbe* and *Druid*, and the *Champion* corvette; “Old Blowhard,” as he was called, captain of the *Thisbe*, acting as commodore. The *Champion* had a busy time of it whipping up the laggards and calling in the stragglers, who would, in spite of orders to the contrary, steer their own course. The *Ouzel Galley* was among the well-behaved of the fleet, always keeping her

proper position; and though she could have run well ahead of most of them, Owen never failed to shorten sail when necessary, for which he was complimented by Mr Ferris. Perhaps Ellen might have preferred more frequently seeing the *Champion*, which she soon learned to distinguish from the rest of the fleet. The *Druid* was employed much as the *Champion*; but Old Blowhard kept his proper position in the van, making signals with his bunting or guns as occasion required.

The greater portion of the passage was accomplished without an enemy's cruiser having been sighted; indeed, no small French squadron would have ventured to approach the formidable-looking fleet, as many of the merchantmen carried guns, and three or four of them would have been a match for any frigate, or, at all events, would not have yielded without a hard struggle.

Meantime Gerald, who was disposed under all circumstances to make himself happy, thought the *Champion's* employment very good fun, notwithstanding the grumblings of old Beater and Crowhurst, who were from morning till night abusing the slow-sailing "sugar-hogsheads," as they designated the merchant craft. He was only a little disappointed at having no opportunity of paying his friend a visit on board the *Ouzel Galley*—a feeling probably shared with him by the second lieutenant. The *Champion* had been compelled to dispose of most of the pressed men between the two frigates, retaining only a few to make up her own complement. Among them was the man captured in the Dublin lodging-house, who had entered under the name of Michael Dillon. When Gerald came to see him oftener, the supposed likeness to Carnegian wore off, though still there was a wonderful similarity in the voice and manner. Dillon soon showed himself to be a bold and active seaman, and thereby gained the good opinion of the officers, though his behaviour was generally surly, especially towards the English portion of the crew. He took pains however, to ingratiate himself with the Irishmen, by being always ready to do a good turn to any of them, very frequently even sharing his grog with them—the highest mark of regard one seaman can show to another. Gerald, who naturally observed the man, fancied that he looked at him with a suspicious eye, and was inclined to keep out of his way; but at the same time he treated him, as he did the other midshipmen, with the required amount of respect, though certainly not with a particle more.

"You see, Tracy, I told you that Dillon and the rest of the pressed men would soon be brought into order by the discipline

of a man-of-war," observed Mr Foley one day to Gerald, who was in his watch. "Blustering fellows, such as he appeared, become in a few weeks perfectly lamb-like."

"I wouldn't trust him overmuch, sir, nevertheless," answered Gerald. "From a remark the carpenter made to me the other day, he has formed no favourable opinion of him. He has several times found him talking in a low voice to the men, as if he had some especial object in view, and Mr O'Rourke thinks that, if he had an opportunity of doing mischief, he would do it."

"I am not fond of hearing unfavourable reports of the men, and I recommend you not to indulge in the habit of making them, unless officially required so to do," said the lieutenant, rather annoyed at Gerald's remarks.

"I had no intention of bringing them to you, sir," answered Gerald; "but when you spoke of Dillon, I felt myself called on to say what I had heard, especially as I have had suspicions of the man from the first. I indeed believed him to be a person we had on board the *Ouzel Galley*, and who, it was afterwards discovered, had been guilty of an act of piracy and murder."

"But if he is not the man you took him for, you should overcome your prejudice," remarked the lieutenant.

"I try to do so, sir," said Gerald, "and I should have thought no more about him if I hadn't heard remarks which aroused my former suspicions."

"I believe you are right, after all, Tracy," said Mr Foley; "we'll keep an eye on the man, and not place him in a position where he can do any harm."

This conversation took place when the convoy was about four or five days' sail from the West Indies.

"The commodore is signalling, sir," cried young Lord Mountstephen, who was acting as signal midshipman, "'A sail to the southward!—the *Champion* to chase and ascertain her character.'"

"Make the answering signal," said Mr Foley. "Tracy, go and report to the captain."

The wind was at this time about south-east. The *Thisbe* was in her usual station to windward of the fleet and abeam of the leading vessel, and the fleet with flowing sheets was steering to

the westward. The *Champion*, hauling her wind, stood out from among them.

"The commodore suspects the stranger to be an enemy," observed the commander to Mr Foley. A look-out with sharp eyes was sent aloft, to report as soon as the sail indicated by the frigate should appear in sight. She was before long seen, and was evidently a large ship standing to the north-west, a course which would bring her up to the convoy.

"We must have a nearer look at her," said the commander; "she is more probably a friend than an enemy."

"Two other sail," cried the look-out from aloft, "following in the wake of the first."

Still the corvette, according to orders, stood on. As she approached the stranger, the commander changed his opinion.

"They are Frenchmen," he observed to his first lieutenant; "we'll keep away and run back to the commodore. If, as I suspect, all three are frigates, or perhaps larger craft, we shall have to bring them to action and allow the convoy to escape."

The announcement caused considerable excitement on board. "We shall probably be in action before the day is out," cried Gerald, as he went into the midshipmen's berth, "and have pretty hot work, too, if the Frenchmen show any pluck."

"The best news I've heard for many a day," said old Crowhurst. "Notwithstanding all I've done for my country, it's the only chance I have of getting promoted."

"I don't see how that's to be," said Gerald; "mates are not often mentioned in despatches."

"But if a happy shot were to knock either of our superiors on the head, I should obtain the rank I merit," replied the mate. "For that matter, I've seen service enough and done deeds sufficient to deserve being made a commander or post-captain."

"Long life to you, Captain Crowhurst!" exclaimed Gerald. "If I was a Lord of the Admiralty I'd promote you to-day and superannuate you to-morrow. I don't suppose the service would be greatly the loser."



"That youngster requires a cobbing," said Beater, who perceived what the other did not, that Gerald was laughing at him; and he pulled out his cob, prepared to inflict condign punishment.

"Now don't, till the action's over," said Gerald, getting ready to make his exit from the berth; "then, if the enemy's shot hasn't taken either of our heads off, you'll be welcome to do what you like—if you can catch me—and I don't intend that you should do that same just now;" and Gerald sprang through the doorway out of reach of the irate old mate. The other members of the berth talked over the probabilities of the expected fight. One and all were ready enough for it, especially two or three who had never yet seen a shot fired in anger; they having but little conception of what the result of a hard-fought action would be, even should they prove victorious.

As soon as the *Champion* got within signalling distance of the commodore, Captain Olding reported three sail of the enemy in sight.

On this the *Thisbe* hoisted a signal to the *Druid* to join her, while the merchant vessels were directed to keep together and to stand on as they were steering. The three men-of-war now hauled up a little, the sooner to meet the enemy, the *Champion* being to windward of the frigates.

"Old Blowhard expects that the enemy will take us for the advanced frigates of a large fleet, and will probably think it wiser to keep out of our way than to come nearer," observed Captain Olding to his first lieutenant, "Though we should beat them, we should gain but little by an action."

"I agree with you, sir. I never fancied fighting for barren glory, I confess," said Mr Tarwig; "and as our first duty is to defend our convoy, I conclude that the commodore will be satisfied if we can beat off the enemy."

"We may hope to do that, even though the *Champion* will be somewhat overmatched; but I can trust to the ship's company to do their duty," said the captain, in a firm tone. "Clear the ship for action, Mr Tarwig."

"Ay, ay, sir," answered the first lieutenant, giving the necessary orders. Lieutenant Foley and the other officers set about carrying them out with alacrity. He was glad to be actively employed, for many anxious thoughts oppressed his mind. He could not conceal from himself the fearful odds to which they were exposed, and what might possibly be the issue of the

approaching conflict. One of the enemy was certainly greatly superior in force to the *Champion*, and the other two French ships might be much larger than the *Thisbe* and *Druid*. Even should their own ships be disabled, though not captured, many of the merchant fleet might fall a prey to the Frenchmen, and the *Ouzel Galley* might possibly be among the number. What then would be the fate of Ellen and her father? It was of the greatest importance to Mr Ferris to reach Jamaica without delay, and instead of that he might very likely be carried to France, or detained as a prisoner in one of the French West India islands; while Ellen must be exposed to much annoyance and suffering. He himself had no coward fears for his own life; but he knew full well, should he fall, the grief and anguish it would cause her.

All such thoughts were, however, put to flight as the two squadrons approached each other, the *Thisbe* leading and the *Champion*, according to orders received from the commodore, bringing up the rear. Old Blowhard's object was to disable one of the French frigates before he attacked the other two, so that she might become a more equal antagonist for the *Champion*. As the squadrons approached, it was seen that each of the French frigates carried more guns than the *Thisbe* and *Druid*, and nearly twice as many as the *Champion*. Old Blowhard, however, nothing daunted, stood on, firm to his purpose of attacking the enemy and leaving the convoy time to escape. The leading French frigate was a considerable way ahead of her consorts; on seeing the determined bearing of the English, she shortened sail, while they spread all the canvas they could to come up with her—the *Thisbe* carrying all she could set, in order to attack her before they could accomplish their object. Just as the *Thisbe* brought the enemy on her lee bow, the commodore threw out a signal to the *Druid* to keep away and to rake the French frigate, while he poured his whole broadside into her. He also ordered the *Champion* to imitate his example, and then to come about and fire her larboard broadside. The French captain might, of course, defeat these various manoeuvres by either keeping away or hauling his wind.

Every person on board was watching anxiously to see what he would do. No moments in a seaman's life are so intensely exciting as those when, before a shot is fired, his ship is standing into action. The wind was moderate, the sky of a cerulean hue, and the sea tolerably calm, the rays of the sun glittering on the snowy crests of the waves. The looked-for moment at length arrived. The *Thisbe's* foremost gun broke the deep silence which had hitherto reigned over the ocean. It was

rapidly followed by her broadside guns, to which the Frenchman replied with spirit. The *Druid*, suddenly putting up her helm, fired the whole of her larboard broadside into the Frenchman's bows, then again luffing up in time to fire her starboard guns, trained well aft, before the *Champion* got into a position by which she might suffer from their shot. The corvette now stood in to action, running so close to her large antagonist that their respective yardarms almost touched, most of the shot from the French frigate's upper deck going harmlessly over her, though she suffered considerably from those of the main-deck. Her rigging, however, escaping much damage, she was able to haul her wind and come about. Notwithstanding the severe punishment she was receiving, the French frigate gave no signs of surrendering.

"We can tackle her now, I think, by ourselves," observed Captain Olding to his first lieutenant. The commodore, however, had no intention of allowing his small consort to do that. His first broadside had cut away many of the braces of the French ship, and severely wounded her mainyard. He now, consequently, having come about, was able to range up on her starboard quarter directly after the *Champion* had passed on. Again pouring in his broadside, he shot away the French frigate's mizen-mast, which came crashing down on deck. Shouts rose from the decks of the English ships as what had occurred was seen. Both the English frigates had now to engage the two Frenchmen—one following the other, they were quickly exchanging broadsides. The *Thisbe* then addressed herself especially to the second French frigate, while the *Druid* took the third in hand, the commodore ordering the *Champion* to continue her attack on the first till he could come to her assistance.

All three of the English ships had by this time lost a number of men, though they had inflicted still greater damage on the French frigates. Captain Olding fought the corvette bravely, manoeuvring to keep ahead of his antagonist. The great object had already been gained, the escape of the merchant fleet, the topgallantsails of the rearmost vessels of which had long since disappeared beneath the horizon. Though the *Champion's* rigging remained uninjured, with the exception of a brace or two cut through, she had received some severe damages in her hull. Three men had been killed, and six, including her gunner, wounded.

"We are succeeding better than might have been expected, Tarwig," observed Captain Olding. "If we can't make this fellow

strike, we can keep him from running away or joining his consorts. See, there goes the *Druid's* mainmast, and there comes her foremast. Blowhard must take care not to have both the enemy on him at once, or he may fare no better."

For a few minutes it was difficult to see what the four ships were about, so close were they together, and enveloped in smoke; for the fall of the English frigate's masts had encouraged the Frenchmen (whose fire had somewhat slackened) to fresh exertions, and their fire was renewed with greater vigour than before. Lieutenant Foley turned his eye towards them, for it was very evident that the corvette, unless she could knock away another of her antagonist's masts, was not likely to gain the victory. He anxiously looked for the commodore's promised assistance. Presently, one of the combatants was seen issuing from the smoke, followed closely by the other, and standing towards the corvette. Unless she could make good her escape, her capture or destruction was scarcely problematical. The *Thisbe* was following, firing her guns as they could be brought to bear; but she could not arrive in time to save the corvette. Captain Olding had no intention of deserting his consorts; he hauled up, therefore, to the southward in order to tack and stand down towards the *Druid*. He now saw that the hulls of the French frigates were sorely battered. One of them threw out signals, when their leading frigate, coming round on the starboard tack, made all sail to the northward, as did both the others, apparently having had enough of fighting. The commodore now signalled to the *Champion* to stand after the convoy, and he himself was soon afterwards seen following, having sent a party of his hand on board the *Druid* to assist her in repairing damages.

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## Chapter Ten.

**The Champion steers after the merchantmen—The merchantmen sighted—Shots heard—Two vessels seen engaged—The Champion runs alongside the Ouzel Galley—Her crew drives back the pirates—She goes in chase of the pirate—Norman and Gerald left on board the Ouzel Galley—Damages repaired—Proceed on to Jamaica—Two fresh foes sighted—The Champion engages them—The Thisbe and Druid appear—The enemy flies—The convoy enters Port Royal harbour—Gerald returns on board the Champion—His**

**announcement disappoints Crowhurst—Lieutenant Foley at East Mount—Ellen and her father go to Bellevue.**

The *Champion*, under all sail, ran on to overtake the convoy and announce the satisfactory intelligence that the enemy, severely shattered, had been beaten off. A look-out was kept from the mast-head, but as yet no sail were in sight, and as the sun was sinking low, there was no hope of coming up with them before dark. Still, it was possible that the corvette might do so before the next morning. By that time they would be approaching the Bahama or Windward Channel, a short way to the southward of Saint Salvador, as the Spaniards called it, or Cat Island, as it was named by the English buccaneers—the first land belonging to America discovered by Columbus on his voyage in search of the Indies.

"They are not likely to attempt running through the passage without waiting for our convoy," observed the first lieutenant to Norman Foley. "Besides the French, the Bahamas still swarm with picarooning rascals, who are ever on the look-out for merchant craft, and would not scruple to lay aboard any they fancy they can overcome."

"Even the most daring would scarcely venture, I hope, to attack a fleet among which are so many armed vessels, well able either to defend themselves or to retaliate on an intruder," answered Lieutenant Foley, whose thoughts immediately flew to the *Ouzel Galley*.

"They would run the chance of getting off scot free in the confusion their sudden appearance would make," said Mr Tarwig. "There is no exploit, however hazardous, they would not undertake with the chance of obtaining a good booty. I took part in the capture of several notorious pirates a few years ago. One fellow blew up his ship rather than surrender, and all died hardened villains, as they had lived."

"The greater need for us to overtake our friends without delay," answered the second lieutenant, who shortly afterwards went forward to take a look through his night-glass, in the hope of distinguishing some of the lights which the merchant vessels had been directed to hang over the sterns. In vain, however, he swept the horizon with his telescope; had the lights been there, he must have seen them. The commander was almost as anxious as the second lieutenant to overtake the fleet of merchantmen, though he was influenced simply by the desire to do his duty. The watch below had turned in, but most of the

officers kept the deck; even old Crowhurst was continually on the forecastle in the hope of seeing the looked-for lights.

"I fancied that they would have shortened sail and waited for our coming," said Gerald. "What can have induced them to run on?"

"The fear that the Frenchmen would thrash us and overtake them," answered old Beater; "they judge of us by themselves."

"There are as brave fellows in the merchant service as in the Royal Navy," said Gerald, who was piqued at the old mate's remark. "When I was on board the *Ouzel Galley*, we held out as long as any ship of war of similar force would have done. Depend on it, had the merchant vessels been allowed, they would have come to our assistance if we had wanted them."

"A pretty pass we should have come to, to require their aid," exclaimed Crowhurst, in a scornful tone.

"We may require it some day, and you'd be the first to shout for help," answered Gerald. "I took a fancy to the navy, but I'm not going to stand by and hear the merchant service abused."

"Cock-a-doodle-doo! What dunghill have you got to the top of, youngster?" cried the old mate.

"One from which I can crow as loud as you do," said Gerald—at which a chuckle was heard from several of the men standing within earshot. Crowhurst's anger was rising; he was considering what punishment he should inflict on the audacious youngster, when the cry was heard of "A light ahead!" and presently afterwards several others were seen. There could be little doubt, from their position, that they were shown by merchant vessels, though the darkness prevented the vessels themselves from being distinguished. A sharp look-out was kept that the corvette might not run foul of any stragglers who were neglecting to show their lights. Presently the sound of a shot was heard, followed by several others coming up faintly against the wind.

"Those sounds come from the north-west," observed the master.

"One of the merchantmen on shore, I fear," said the commander.

"Those guns we hear are nearer to us than any land. The leading vessels are not up to Atwood Quay yet," answered the master. "Depend on it, some of the convoy are attacked and are defending themselves."

"Let us hope that they may do so successfully till we can get up to assist them, and turn the tables on the Frenchmen," answered the commander.

"Little doubt about our doing that," said the master. "Judging by the reports, the enemy's ship is not a heavy one—a brig or sloop at the most—or she may be one of those picarooning craft often found cruising in these seas."

The last remark was heard by Norman Foley, who had just then joined the speakers. An indefinite apprehension seized him that the *Ouzel Galley* might be the vessel engaged, but from what Ellen had told him he felt sure that Captain Massey, if attacked, would not yield as long as he could keep his ship afloat. The breeze, which had fallen light at sundown, now freshened up, and the corvette made good way through the water. At length the rearmost merchantman was overtaken. Commander Olding hailed, and her master, in reply, gave her name.

"What do those guns mean?" asked Captain Olding.

"Can't say, sir," was the answer.

"Whereabouts in the fleet is the *Ouzel Galley*?" inquired Norman Foley.

"She was among the leading vessels at sundown, and to the northward of most of them," answered the master. Before any other questions could be put or replies received, the *Champion* glided by the slow-sailing merchant ship. Several other vessels were passed, generally too far off for any exchange of words. Now even the flashes of the guns could be seen, and the exact position of the combatants observed. They were but a short distance from each other, one to the northward, hanging on the quarter of the other. The drum beat to quarters, and the watch below came tumbling up on deck, hurrying to the guns. It was impossible in the darkness to distinguish the nationality of the two vessels, which appeared to be about the same size. Captain Olding, addressing the crew, ordered them on no account to fire, lest they might injure a friend instead of a foe. As the *Champion* stood on, he kept a sharp watch through his telescope on the combatants, neither of which seemed aware of

his approach. Presently the sternmost was seen to put down her helm and lay the other aboard on the lee side.

"The sternmost fellow is an enemy, we may depend on that," observed the captain; "we can't use our guns without the risk of injuring our friends."

As the *Champion* drew near, loud shouts and cries could be heard, and the flashes of muskets and pistols seen. It was evident that a fierce combat was taking place; the boarders were called away ready for action.

"Shorten sail!" shouted the captain, "see the grappling-irons ready! up with the helm!"

The next instant the two ships came in contact. Norman Foley and Gerald were the first to spring on board; the dreadful idea had taken hold of both of them that the vessel attacked was the *Ouzel Galley*. Of this, the moment they reached her deck, they were convinced when they caught sight of Owen Massey's figure, cutlass in hand, backed by Dan and Pompey, combating with an overwhelming number of enemies, who appeared already to have gained possession of the greater part of the ship. Among those who formed the boarding-party was Dillon, who showed as much alacrity as any one. He was soon in the midst of the fight, attacking the boarders of the other ship with desperate fury. The leader of the latter was dressed in a fantastic manner, to give ferocity to his appearance. He was soon crossing blades with Dillon.

"These fellows are pirates!" shouted Captain Olding. "Cut them down; give them no quarter—a reward for the man who gets hold of their leader!"

Dillon and his antagonist had made several cuts at each other, which had been parried with equal skill by both, when the pirate, hearing what Captain Olding shouted out, sprang back apparently to regain his own ship. Dillon, instead of attempting to stop him, warded off a blow aimed at him by another man, and thus enabled the pirate, with a considerable number of his followers, to leap on board his own vessel. The lashings which held her to the *Ouzel Galley* were at the same moment cut, and before the British seamen could follow she dropped from alongside. Her helm was then put up, and her head-sails filling, she ran off before the wind.

Gerald grasped Owen's hand. "Faith, you've had a narrow escape!" he exclaimed.



"Indeed, we have," answered Owen; "and, I fear, have lost a large number of our crew. Had you not come up, we should every one of us been killed."

"Where are Miss Ferris and her father?" asked Norman Foley, turning round to Owen, whom he now recognised.

"They are safe, I trust, below, and will be glad to see you and hear that they have no longer cause for apprehension," answered Owen. "I have too many duties on deck to go."

The lieutenant sprang below, just at the moment that Captain Olding ordered the crew of the corvette to return on board and the grappling-irons to be cast loose.

"We must chase the pirate and punish him for his audacity," he exclaimed.

It was some time, however, before the order could be obeyed and the corvette got clear of the merchantman. Gerald had remained on board. "I ought to tell Mr Foley, or he will be left with you," he said; and he followed his lieutenant below. Before he returned on deck the ships were clear, and the corvette was making sail to go in chase of the pirate.

Owen had persuaded Mr Ferris and Ellen to go into the hold, to which they had been hurried when the first shot had been fired by the pirate. Owen had for some time before been suspicious of the strange sail, which he saw standing up on his starboard quarter, and, thinking that she was very probably an enemy's privateer, was not taken altogether unprepared. He had ordered his powder and shot to be brought on deck, and the guns to be loaded and run out ready for action; when, therefore, a shot from the stranger came flying close to his stern, he fired in return, and at the same time making all sail, endeavoured to keep ahead of her. She now fired shot after shot from her foremost guns, and he had no longer any doubt that she was an enemy which had borne down on the fleet, hoping to pick up one or two of the merchant vessels and be off with them before morning.

"The fellow has made a mistake in attacking us," observed Owen to his first mate. "His greediness tempted him to attack a big ship—he might have succeeded had he run alongside some of the brigs astern."

Pompey, who had accompanied Mr Ferris and his daughter below, returned to report that he had seen them safe in the

hold. "De gentlemen want to come back and fight, but de young lady no let him—she cry so, and hold his hand, and say he get kill; so at last he sit down and stay quiet," remarked Pompey.

"I am very glad to hear it," observed Owen; "he could be of no use in working the guns, and it would be a sad thing to have him injured."

These remarks were made in the intervals of firing. The enemy, however, did not leave them long at rest; their shot soon began to tell with fearful effect; several of the crew fell killed or wounded, and the sails and rigging were much cut about. Still Owen's men were staunch, and stood manfully to their guns, running them in and out so rapidly, and pointing them so well, that they inflicted as much damage as they received; and by the way he manoeuvred his ship he kept the stranger at a distance, and prevented her from running up alongside, which it was evidently her intention to do. She, however, it appeared, by possessing a numerous crew, had an immense advantage in being able to repair her damages far more rapidly than could the people of the *Ouzel Galley* those their ship received. At length, however, the rigging of his ship was so much cut up that Owen could no longer manoeuvre her as he had done, and the pirate, taking advantage of his condition, ran alongside him.

"The enemy are about to board us!" cried Owen; "be ready to repel him—they'll give no quarter!"

The crew, leaving their guns, seized the boarding pikes which had been placed round the mainmast for their use, and, drawing their cutlasses, stood prepared to defend their ship against the fearful odds opposed to them. So occupied had been the combatants that neither of them had perceived the approach of another ship. Uttering wild shouts and shrieks, a number of dark forms were seen scrambling on board the *Ouzel Galley*. The moment they appeared they were attacked vigorously by her crew, led on by Owen and his mates, and many were hurled into the sea or driven back on board their own ship. His success encouraged him to attempt cutting his ship free from the enemy, but while he and his men were thus engaged, a loud voice from the deck of his opponent was heard shouting, "At them again, lads! We mustn't be beaten in this way. I'll lead you; follow me!" and the next moment, another party of boarders appearing, the crew of the *Ouzel Galley* were compelled again to stand on the defensive. And now, in overwhelming numbers, the enemy came leaping down on the deck, and Owen, with anguish, saw that his chance of opposing them successfully was small indeed. Still, like a brave man, he

determined to fight till the last, urging his mates and crew not to yield as long as one remained alive. At this juncture a loud crashing sound was heard, and a large ship was seen gliding up on his larboard side. The hearty British cheer which greeted his ears assured him that succour had arrived, and the next instant the crew of the *Champion* came pouring on board. The subsequent events have already been narrated.

Norman Foley, on going below, soon made his way into the after hold, where he found Miss Ferris and her father. The crashing of the ships together, the shouts and shrieks of the combatants, had greatly alarmed them both. Mr Ferris had been desirous of going on deck to ascertain the state of affairs, and, indeed, had it not been for his daughter, he would have taken a part in the fight. He had done his utmost to calm her terror, but believed that she had too much cause for it, and had found it a difficult task. On hearing Norman Foley approach, she was seized with a not unnatural dread that some of the enemy had made their way below; but on recognising him, forgetting in her joy the reserve she generally exhibited, she sprang forward and threw herself into his arms.

"We are safe—we are safe, father!" she exclaimed; "and you, Norman, have been the means of preserving us. Oh, how we have been longing for you! We thought you were far away, and that that fearful ship would capture us."

Norman, of course, expressed his happiness at having arrived in time to save the *Ouzel Galley* from the enemy, and in a few words explained what had happened.

"You may now with safety come into the cabin," he said, "for the pirate—such I suspect she is—will not again venture to fire. I must there, however, leave you, to return to the *Champion*, as we shall certainly pursue the fellow and punish him for his audacity."

"We shall be glad to get out of this dark place," said Mr Ferris. "Do you help my daughter, and I will follow."

Just as Norman and Ellen were about to enter the cabin, Gerald appeared to summon him on board the *Champion*. After a hasty farewell, he sprang on deck, just in time to see his ship separated from the *Ouzel Galley* and making sail in chase of the pirate. Not, however, unhappy at the occurrence, he returned to the cabin.

"I am very glad we shall have your assistance in getting the ship to rights," said Mr Ferris, "for I fear she is sadly short-handed."

"Tracy and I will give all the aid we can. I wish we had a few of the *Champion's* hands with us," answered the lieutenant.

"Tell me what to do and I will assist you," said Mr Ferris.

"Oh, then I too will come on deck—though I am afraid I cannot help you much," exclaimed Ellen.

Her father would not have prevented her, but Norman begged that he would be content to remain below.

"I regret to say that the deck of the ship presents a scene too dreadful for Miss Ferris to contemplate; and the rigging has been so much cut about that there is still danger from falling blocks or ropes—you might at any moment meet with a serious accident."

Ellen was at length persuaded to retire to her cabin, Norman promising not to leave the ship without coming to bid her farewell. The deck of the *Ouzel Galley* did indeed present a fearful scene. Several of the pirates lay dead between the guns, while five of her own crew had been killed, and many more badly wounded; every plank was slippery with gore, the rigging hung in festoons, the sails were rent and full of holes. Here and there the bulwarks appeared shattered by the shot, which had also damaged the boats and caboose, the masts and spars.

As now and then other vessels of the fleet came passing by, inquiries were made as to what had occurred. "Attacked by a pirate—beaten off—*Champion* gone in chase," was the only answer Owen had time to give.

"No thanks to those who, by clapping on more sail, might have come to our aid, but did not," he could not help remarking to Mr Ferris.

The first thing to be done was to attend to the wounded, who were carried to their berths, where Mr Ferris offered to assist in binding up their hurts and watching them; the next was to heave the dead overboard. This sad office was quickly performed, as there was no time for even the pretence of a service; the dead would not be the worse for going without it, and the attention of the living was too much occupied to listen to a word spoken. Before committing the bodies of the pirates

to the deep, however, they were examined by the light of a lantern, to be sure that no spark of life existed in them, and to ascertain to what country they belonged. Two were men of colour, and the others white men, rough, savage-looking fellows; but it was difficult to decide as to their nationality.

"It matters little what they were," said the second mate, who was attending to that duty; "they were pirates, and have escaped the rope they deserved—of that there's no doubt. Heave them overboard."

Not a moment was to be lost in repairing damages. All hands now set to work to fish the masts and spars, and repair and splice the standing and running rigging. Scarcely had they commenced than day broke, and as the light increased the *Champion* could be seen in chase of their late opponent, who was running under all sail to the north-west.

"That fellow is well acquainted with these seas, or he wouldn't be steering as he now is. Reefs and rocks abound in that direction, but he knows his way among them, and intends, if he can, to lead his pursuer into a scrape," observed Owen.

"Our master is too wide awake to be so caught," answered Gerald, "and the chances are that the pirate escapes. She must be a fast craft; for see, she continues well ahead of our ship, if she isn't gaining on her."

A look-out was now kept for the two islands which are found on either side of the Windward Passage—that known as Long Island being to the west, Crooked Island to the east, both thickly surrounded with rocks and reefs, so that it is necessary to avoid hugging the shores of either one or the other. Crooked Island was first sighted, on the larboard hand. It being some time, however, before the *Ouzel Galley* could again make sail, the greater part of the fleet passed by her, though no one offered to send assistance. The *Champion* could still be seen, hull down, but the chase was lost sight of. Norman Foley and Gerald were frequently watching their ship through the glass.

"The fellow has escaped, after all," cried the former, as he handed the telescope to Gerald; "our ship has kept away, and is steering for the passage."

"Can the commander suppose that we were killed, that he doesn't come back to inquire for us?" observe Gerald.

"I conclude that such must be the case," said the lieutenant.

"Then, sir, I suspect old Crowhurst will be bitterly disappointed when he finds that he isn't to step into your shoes," said Gerald; "he'll complain that he has lost another chance of getting promoted."

"I hope that he may obtain his promotion some other way," answered Mr Foley, laughing. "It is so commonly the wish of old mates, that lieutenants should not find fault with them, as they don't wish us any ill."

"I should think, sir, that that was the worst they could wish a man," said Gerald.

"Not at all, provided they don't take any steps to carry out their wishes," answered the lieutenant. "However, your messmate will not long be allowed to indulge in his dream."

The *Ouzel Galley* was now one of the last of the fleet, most of the other vessels having passed her. The corvette was seen making signals to them to keep together; and now that they were so near their destination, they were all eager to hurry on, in spite of the risk of capture from any of the enemy's men-of-war or privateers which might be lying in wait for them off the coasts of Cuba and Saint Domingo. Mr Foley had fully expected that by this time the *Thisbe* and *Druid* would have come up with them, but neither of the frigates had yet appeared. He took many an anxious glance astern; but the day drew on, and yet they were not in sight.

"I wish we could see them," he observed to Owen; "for, though the *Champion* will give a good account of any ship of her own size, if more than one of the enemy's cruisers were to get in among the fleet, some of them would be pretty sure to be carried off, as all, I fear, would not fight as well as you have done, Captain Massey."

"We must run the chance, sir; it won't do to be waiting for the frigates, and we may hope to get into Port Royal without another brush," answered Owen.

By crowding on all the sail she could carry, the *Ouzel Galley* soon got again into the body of the fleet, which was now steering south in pretty compact order. When the next morning broke, the east end of Cuba was in sight, while the *Champion* was a short distance ahead, leading the fleet. A bright look-out was kept, but no strangers were seen. Some hours' run brought the north-west end of Hispaniola in view. Ellen came on deck to enjoy her first sight of West Indian scenery. Lieutenant Foley

was, as may be supposed, very happy in her society, and was in no hurry to make known his existence to his friends on board the *Champion*. He had as yet had no opportunity of signalling the corvette; he therefore entertained the hope that he might be able to remain on board till their arrival at Port Royal.

The fleet was about half-way across the broad bay of Gonaves, formed by two headlands which stretch out on the western side of Hispaniola, when two sail were seen standing out from the north-eastern corner. They were large ships, but whether friends or foes it was difficult to determine. Soon after they were discovered they spread more canvas. This circumstance was suspicious; signals were made by the *Champion* and some of the nearer ships, and she hauling her wind stood back towards the strangers. They, however, pressed on as before. Mr Foley and Gerald were now wishing that they were on board.

"If those are either French or Spaniards, the *Champion* will have a brush with them, sir; big as they are, she'll beat them off too," exclaimed Gerald. "I wish we could go and help her. What do you say, Captain Massey?"

"That, with our diminished crew, we could be of no real assistance; besides which, it is our duty to get into harbour as quickly as possible," answered Owen. "I am sure Lieutenant Foley will agree with me."

"There is no doubt about it," said the lieutenant, who would have been very unwilling, on Ellen's account, to run the ship into danger, even had he not seen the folly of so doing. The *Champion* having placed herself between the strangers and the fleet, again kept away. She apparently was satisfied that they were enemies, and too large to attack with any hope of success.

"Captain Olding is doing his duty, as he always does," observed Norman Foley to Owen; "in spite of the great disparity of force, he will do his best to defend the convoy. See, he is signalling; what does he say, captain?"

Owen examined the signal-book. "'Fleet to make all sail and steer for Jamaica'—that is what we are doing, though, and few of the vessels can carry more canvas than at present," he answered.

Some, however, were seen setting royals and studding-sails. Every ship in the fleet pressed forward over the calm blue waters with all the sail she could carry. The sight was a beautiful one, as the canvas shone in the rays of the bright sun

darting from a cloudless sky and Ellen likened them to swans of snowy plumage gliding over some inland lake. She felt less anxiety than did either Mr Foley or Owen, who saw more clearly the danger to which the *Champion* was exposed. Already the guns of the enemy were heard as they opened on their small antagonist, while she returned them with her stern-chasers.

"By the way the enemy are firing, their aim is to wing the *Champion*, and she'll then, they hope, become an easy prey," said the lieutenant to Owen. "They may be mistaken. Captain Olding is not the man to strike while he has a stick standing."

Some time more passed by. The French gunnery may not have been very good. Still the *Champion* sailed on, not a mast nor a spar knocked away, though her canvas was riddled with shot. Should she be disabled, it was pretty evident that several of the merchantmen must be captured, and that the *Ouzel Galley*, crippled as she was, would be among the number. The proceedings of the *Champion* and the enemy were therefore watched with intense anxiety.

"There goes her main-topmast," cried Owen, almost with a groan.

"I ought to be on board," said Lieutenant Foley. "I must ask for one of your boats, Captain Massey."

"You should be welcome, but not one of them can swim, nor could I spare you any of my hands; so I am afraid, sir, you must be content to remain on board the *Ouzel Galley*," answered Owen. "Your presence could not change the fate of the day, and you would be made a prisoner by the French, instead of having a chance of escaping."

The fire of the enemy now became hotter than ever, when Gerald, who had gone aloft, shouted, "Two ships in sight to the northward!"

"What are they like?" asked Owen.

"One looks to me as if one were under jury-masts; the other's all ataunto," answered Gerald.

"I trust so," ejaculated Owen; "if so, they must be the *Thisbe* and *Druid*."

Lieutenant Foley immediately joined the midshipman at the mast-head, carrying his spy-glass. "I have no doubt that they



are friends," he shouted, after inspecting them narrowly; "the enemy have made them out, and are signalling each other."

The eyes of many on board the merchant fleet were turned in the direction of the two ships, which in a short time could be descried from the deck. Shouts arose from many a throat when the Frenchmen were seen, having hauled to the wind, standing back up the bay; while the gallant little *Champion* continued her course after the convoy she had so bravely defended. The frigates, instead of following her, stood into the bay in pursuit of the Frenchmen. At nightfall, however, they were again descried running out, having apparently either missed the vessels they were in chase of, or found that the latter had got into harbour for shelter. The convoy now stood on till the end of Jamaica was rounded.

The following day, as soon as the sea breeze set in, the merchantmen approached Port Royal harbour, the *Ouzel Galley* being among the leading vessels. Ellen stood on the deck admiring the magnificent and, to her, so novel scenery, with Norman by her side to point out its varied features. Stretching away east and west appeared lofty blue mountains rising above a stratum of clouds which rolled along their precipitous sides; in some directions the rugged hills were seen furrowed by ravines, while in others steep cliffs descended abruptly to the sea; in many places appeared the richest vegetation, covering the sides of the slopes, and here and there patches of bright emerald green, with the white residences of the managers just visible amid them. At length, right ahead could be seen the town of Port Royal, at the end of a narrow spit of land known as the Palisades, composed of sand and overgrown with mangroves, which sweeps round from the east and runs for several miles directly west, the town being at the western end. The new town has risen above the ruins of its wealthy, iniquitous predecessor, suddenly overwhelmed by an earthquake, and in a few seconds sunk many fathoms deep beneath the ocean. The spit forms a natural breakwater to the magnificent harbour of Port Royal, or Kingston, capable of containing in its spacious basin the fleets of all the world. The batteries of Port Royal completely command its entrance, aided by the guns of Fort Augusta and the Rock Fort on the opposite side. The *Ouzel Galley*, as she ran in, passed close under the ramparts of Fort Charles, thickly studded with heavy ordnance which would have effectually prevented the entrance of a hostile fleet. This passed, she stood on up the extensive lagoon, towards the further end of which, on the northern shore, could be seen the city of Kingston, a wide plain extending for a considerable distance inland, backed

by a series of irregular mountains rising one beyond another, hills piled upon hills of various elevations, with picturesque valleys, dark chasms, and numerous trees. Far off, on the top of the declivity on which the city stands, were visible the barracks of Hope Park Camp, and nearer, on a still more conspicuous spot, the well-known Admiral's Pen, the residence of the naval commander-in-chief on the station.

The *Ouzel Galley* and most of the merchantmen ran up the lagoon till they came to an anchor off Kingston. As the *Champion* had not yet entered the harbour, Lieutenant Foley undertook to escort Mr and Miss Ferris on shore, intending as soon as he had done so to engage a shore boat and return on board his own ship. Gerald begged to be allowed to remain on board, and his lieutenant promised to call for him on his way down the harbour. No sooner, however, had the party left the ship than, seeing a passage boat on her way down to Port Royal, Gerald hailed her and desired to be put on board the *Champion*, which, he calculated, would by that time have come into port. Very soon, greatly to his delight, he saw her come to an anchor, just before the boat reached Port Royal; and as he climbed up on one side, the captain in his gig shoved off on the other. As he stepped through the gangway he discovered by the countenances of those who observed him that his appearance created considerable astonishment; but, without answering any of the questions put to him, he went aft to the first lieutenant, and reported himself as come on board.

"Why, Tracy, it was supposed you were killed!" exclaimed Mr Tarwig. "Has Mr Foley escaped as well as you?"

"Yes, sir, I am happy to say so," answered Gerald; and he briefly recounted what had happened.

"The captain will be glad to hear this," observed Mr Tarwig, who having no time for talking, resumed the duty he was carrying on; and Gerald hurried away to try the effect the news he had brought would produce on his older messmates. He looked out for old Beater, who was not to be seen, and he observed Crowhurst on the forecastle.

"There he is, crowing as loud as ever," thought Gerald, as he remarked the consequential air with which the old mate walked the deck and shouted to the men. The lately trim corvette was much knocked about; besides the loss of her main-topmast, many of her other spars had been wounded, her sails riddled with shot, while her bulwarks and deck had been torn open in

several places, one of her guns disabled, and most of her boats damaged.

The first person he met who had time to exchange a word with him was the purser. "What, Tracy," he exclaimed, "you still in the land of the living! I had written D at the end of your name; I shall have the trouble of crossing it out again. We were going to put up your effects for sale to-morrow."

"Much obliged to you, sir," answered Gerald, "and must apologise for giving you so much trouble. Were Mr Foley's effects to be sold at the same time? I suppose Beater or Crowhurst expect to get promoted in his place."

"Beater has got all the promotion he ever will, poor fellow," answered Mr Cheeseeparings; "he was the only officer killed in our late action, though we had six men wounded. But Crowhurst is looking forward to get his lieutenancy to a certainty."

"I concluded that he would do so; but as Mr Foley happens to be alive, he will be rather disappointed," said Gerald.

"Dear me! has he escaped too?" exclaimed the purser. "Well, though I haven't to sell his effects, I really am glad; and so, I am sure, will be Billhook and Mac."

"If you'll excuse me, sir, I'll go and communicate the pleasing intelligence to Crowhurst, who will, I hope, rejoice as much as the gun-room officers," said Gerald. Directly afterwards he met Nat Kiddle. "Come along," he said, "and see me pull old Crowhurst down a peg or two."

The two midshipmen met Crowhurst coming aft. "What, youngster, are you alive?" he exclaimed. "I shall have some work for you and Kiddle directly."

"Yes, old fellow, I'm alive and well," answered Gerald, "and will return to my duty as soon as the commander or one of the lieutenants orders me."

"Let me tell you, youngster, I don't choose to be called old fellow, and as I am acting lieutenant, you will obey my orders."

"Certainly," said Gerald, "till Mr Foley returns, which I expect he will do this evening."

"What—you don't mean to say so!—did Mr Foley escape with you?" exclaimed the old mate, his countenance falling, and his

whole air changing in a moment. Gerald then, with infinite satisfaction, described the way he and the lieutenant had been left on board the *Ouzel Galley*. Not being required just then, he dived into the berth to recount his adventures to the rest of his messmates.

In a short time the two frigates came in, and anchored near the *Champion*, where already lay several other large ships of war forming the Jamaica fleet, under the command of Admiral Cotes. Gerald found his messmates not very much out of spirits at the loss of Beater. The old mate's body lay between two guns, covered by an ensign; and it, with that of two other men who had been killed, was carried on shore and buried in the graveyard of Port Royal, where so many gallant British seamen sleep their last.

Meantime Mr Ferris and Ellen had gone on shore, escorted by Lieutenant Foley. Those were the palmy days of Kingston. Men-of-war and privateers were constantly coming in with rich prizes, whose cargoes added greatly to the wealth of the city; the streets were crowded with blacks carrying bales of all descriptions to the stores; merchants' clerks were hurrying to the quays to superintend the unloading of vessels, and naval and military officers were moving about in all directions; the seamen on leave were rolling here and there, shouting forth their sea ditties; while black and brown women with baskets of fruit and vegetables were standing at the corners of the streets, often surrounded by a party of Jack-tars, who quickly emptied them of their contents.

A short walk soon brought the lieutenant and his friends to the counting-house of Mr Thomas Twigg, the agent of the firm, and a relative of one of the partners. They were at once shown to a large airy room over the office, looking out on the harbour, containing a table spread for luncheon, consisting of numerous West Indian delicacies. Mr Twigg, of course, pressed the lieutenant to remain.

"You don't know whether your ship has come in, and even if she has, they've got on very well without you, and an hour more or less can make no difference," he observed. Norman Foley was in no hurry to take his departure. "Mr and Miss Ferris are coming to my pen, about five miles off," continued Mr Twigg, "and I hope you will accompany them. We shall start in about a couple of hours, when there will be more shade on the road than there is at present."

The lieutenant, very unwillingly, was compelled to decline the invitation, but agreed to remain to see his friends off. On hearing of Gerald, Mr Twigg insisted on sending on board the *Ouzel Galley* to invite him, and Gerald afterwards found that in his eagerness to witness the disappointment of his messmate he had thereby lost a pleasant expedition, he having left the ship before the message arrived on board; but, soon afterwards, who should come in but Captain Olding, who was so delighted to find that his lieutenant and midshipman had escaped, that he at once gave them both leave to accept Mr Twigg's invitation. Norman Foley had the happiness of accompanying Ellen in one carriage, while Mr Ferris and his friend, who had much to talk about, went in another. Ellen was, of course, delighted with the scenery and the tropical vegetation, so new to her, though she possibly did not examine them as minutely as she might have done under other circumstances: Norman would have to leave her in a day or two, and he might not return for a long time. She had heard her father say that he expected shortly to accompany Mr Twigg to an estate on the other side of the island, and even should Norman's ship come into Port Royal, he might not be able to pay her a visit. Of course he promised to come if he could, even though he might be able to remain only a few hours. Bellevue was a beautiful spot about fifty miles off, on the other side of the Blue Mountains, a short distance from Saint Ann's Bay, and Norman hoped that his ship might be cruising off the north coast, and that he would then have an opportunity of seeing her. At all events, they neither of them were more unhappy than was necessary at the thoughts of their approaching separation.

On their arrival at East Mount, Mr Twigg's country house, Ellen was amused by the number of black slaves who rushed out to receive them, chattering and laughing, and doing their best to welcome the strangers. The house was a one-storied building, with a broad verandah round it, standing on the summit of a hill of considerable elevation overlooking the plain, with Kingston and the harbour in the distance; it was thus exposed to the sea breeze, so necessary to anything like enjoyment in the tropics. Mrs Twigg, a buxom little lady—a fitting partner to her sprightly, jovial spouse—received Ellen with a hearty welcome to Jamaica. She evidently saw how matters stood between her and the young lieutenant, and, as far as her sense of the duties of a hostess would allow her, left them together as much as they could desire, while Mr Ferris and her husband were for the greater part of the day absent at Kingston. Those two days while Norman remained at East Mount were among the

brightest they had hitherto enjoyed. The place seemed a perfect Eden, with its green lawn kept ever verdant by the sparkling stream which flowed down on one side from the hill above, bordered by the graceful and variously shaped trees of the tropics—the tall maple arrow, surrounded by its flowering crown of yellow; the Spanish needle, with its dagger-like leaves; the quilled pimploe, a species of cactus; and numberless others, from the branches of which hung lilac and purple wreaths in rich festoons—while the sweet notes of the feathered songsters ever and anon burst forth, and here and there could be seen tiny humming-birds flitting from flower to flower, fluttering for a moment and then darting off with the speed of lightning, their gem-like plumage glittering in the sun.

Ellen and Norman, though they often talked of the past, spoke most of the future, when he should have gained his promotion, and, the war being over, might quit the service without dishonour and live on shore.

After arranging his affairs in Jamaica, which he believed would occupy some months, Mr Ferris proposed returning to Ireland. He intended to make the voyage in the *Ouzel Galley* when she could sail under safe convoy. In the mean time he expected to spend two or three months at Bellevue, and Norman hoped that they might there again meet. Happily for themselves, they were ignorant of the dark storm which was brewing over the island.

At length Norman's leave expired, and he had to return on board the *Champion*. A few days afterwards Mr Ferris and Ellen, accompanied by Mr and Mrs Twigg and their family, set off across the island for Bellevue.

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## Chapter Eleven.

**The Ouzel Galley ordered round to Montego Bay—Fresh guns and stores taken on board—A crimp brings off some men in no unusual condition—Two volunteers—Visit from Gerald—**

**The Ouzel Galley sails—Suspensions as to one of the volunteers—Montego Bay reached—A dinner on shore—Warnings—Last sight of the Ouzel Galley from the shore—Bellevue and its inhabitants—Archie Sandys—Describes a Jumby dance—Signs of a coming storm—A hurricane—Anxiety regarding the Ouzel Galley—Effects of the hurricane.**

The *Ouzel Galley* was soon unloaded. Some time, however, was spent in repairing the damages she had received from the pirate, after which Owen was preparing to take on board a fresh cargo, when he received orders to proceed round to Montego Bay, where a large amount of produce, which the firm had purchased from a neighbouring estate, was awaiting shipment.

"You will run but little risk, I hope, from the enemy's cruisers, and against them we have at all events insured, though not to the full amount, for we know that we can trust to the sailing qualities of the *Ouzel Galley*, and to your courage, judgment, and seamanship," wrote Mr Ferris. "If a convoy can be procured, you will of course take advantage of it; but if not, so great is the importance of getting the produce home without delay, that we leave it to your discretion to sail alone, should you judge that to be most to our interest. You are also at liberty to increase your armament by two or four guns, if you can carry them, and not only to replace the men you lost in your action with the pirate, but to add ten or a dozen more hands if you can obtain them. You will thus, we hope, be able to beat off any of the enemy's smaller cruisers or such a piratical craft as attacked us coming out; though you will, of course, use all the means in your power to avoid a contest and to make the best of your way home."

Owen was naturally flattered with the letter, though he considered that the dangers he would have to encounter were much greater than those he was likely to meet with in a run home under a sufficient convoy. Gerald, who had been to Kingston, was paying him a visit on board on his way down.

"I wish that I could go with you," he exclaimed, "and so, I dare say, will our second lieutenant. It isn't far off, I fancy, from where Mr Ferris is staying. I'll tell Foley—though I don't think there's much chance of his getting leave, and we shall be sent to sea as soon as we are ready, for the admiral isn't the man to let the grass grow on the bottom of any of his ships."

"I wish that you could come, for I shall find it rather solitary," said Owen. "However, I see no chance of that, and I will now go on shore to get the guns—I'll have the four of them—to order some of the stores I require, and to do what I can to pick up men."

"I'll try to pay you another visit," said Gerald, as he was about to step into the boat alongside. "If I don't see you again, remember to give my love to my father and Norah—and may you have a prosperous trip home."

While Gerald went down the harbour, Owen landed, taking with him Dan and Pompey. The purchase of the guns was an easy matter, as there were plenty to be had, taken out of prizes. He chose two long brass guns, 9-pounders, and two short ones of heavier calibre. The stores were quickly ordered, too; but to procure the men was more difficult. It would be hopeless to expect to get them at all, were he particular as to how he got them or what class of men he got. Still, if he could have his choice, he would take a smaller number of good men rather than his complement of inferior hands. There were, of course, crimps who would be ready to supply him, and he was compelled to apply to one of these personages, who promised to send him on board six or eight hands before next morning. In the mean time Pompey met two old shipmates, blacks like himself, for whom he could answer; and Dan fortunately found a countryman of his own, also a trusty fellow. With these three hands Owen returned to the ship, and the following day the guns and stores were received on board, the former mounted on their carriages and the latter stowed away. Sufficient hands only were wanting to enable him to sail. His friend, the crimp, was as good as his word; which was not surprising, considering that he was to be well paid for it. Towards evening a boat came alongside with the crimp and six men, two of whom only were sitting upright, while the rest were lying along the thwarts. Jonas Jobson, the crimp, a big-boned mulatto, dressed in a broad-brimmed hat, nankeen trousers, and a white jacket, dispensing with a shirt or other clothing, came up the side.

"Dere dey are, cappen," he said, "prime seamen when dey come to demself, and only just a little drunken now. Dese two will answer for dem. Here, you come up, Sam Tar, and you, Jack Noddin."

The two men summoned managed to get up the side, though it was very evident that they were half-seas over. Still they answered for themselves in a tolerably satisfactory manner, and assured the captain that they knew the others, who were as good seamen as ever stepped—only, when they could get a drop of liquor, they would. "There's no denying of it," said Sam Tar, "and so do I—only I knows when to stop, and they don't;" and Sam gave a lurch against Mr Jobson, which called forth an angry rebuke from that gentleman. Owen was not, as may be supposed, altogether satisfied, however. The men were hoisted on board and laid on the deck. Except for their breathing, they might have been so many corpses, so utterly helpless were they.



"You've brought me a pretty lot," said Owen; "they're not likely to come to till I get to sea, and then it's more than probable, to my mind, that they'll not be worth their salt. You should have brought off sober men, that I might have judged of them."

"Ah, cappen, you berry hard on me. How could I keep the men sober? And berry likely if I did dey not come 'tall," answered Mr Jobson, with wonderful effrontery. "You werry 'tickler; oder cappens take any dey can get—drunkee or no drunkee, dese men prime hands when dey come to demself."

Still Owen was firm in refusing to take the drunken men, even though Tar and Noddin muttered that if their mates did not join, neither would they; whereat Mr Jobson began to fear that he should have his labour for nothing, and calling for a bucket, filled it alongside and dashed it over the inanimate forms placed on deck. At first the shower-bath produced not the slightest effect, but after several buckets had been thrown over the men, one of them began to move and to stretch out his arms as if swimming; then another grunted, and desired with sundry unsavoury epithets to be left alone; while a third actually sat upright, and looked stupidly about him. The fourth, however, remained motionless as at first, when Mr Jobson threw another bucket of water over him. At last one of the mates lifted the man's arm; the moment he let go it fell to the deck. He then felt the hand.

"Why, Mr Jobson, you've brought us off a dead man!" he exclaimed. "He is as cold as ice already."

Mr Jobson stooping down, having convinced himself of the fact, coolly observed, "Why, he alive yesterday when he come to my house."

"Yes, and you allowed him to drink himself to death," said Owen. "You'll take him on shore with you, for he couldn't have died on board this vessel."

Mr Jobson demurred. "Why for dat?" he exclaimed. "You take him to sea and throw him oberboard; it save much trouble, and I no charge you for him."

"I should think not," observed Owen. "As for the other three, if Tar and Noddin are ready to answer for them, I will keep them, for they, at all events, are alive and likely to come to in a short time."

To Mr Jobson's disgust the corpse was lowered into the boat, when, having received the sum agreed on, he pulled on shore to give the best account of the matter he could. Owen knew that he would probably state that the man had died on board the *Ouzel Galley*, and he was taking him on shore to be buried; for in the West Indies in those days coroners would not be very particular in inquiring into the way seamen went out of the world. The three men who had been so unceremoniously treated, having been stripped of their clothes, were stowed away in their hammocks to recover from their drunken fit, the other two new hands being allowed also to turn in. Still, Owen would have been glad to have his full complement. He had intended to sail that night with the land wind as soon as the moon was up, and was seated in his cabin waiting for the pilot, and writing a report of his proceedings to Mr Ferris, when Dan announced that two men were in a boat alongside, who wished to see him. He went on deck and told the men to come on board. They did so; both of them were sailor-like fellows. One of them, stepping forward and doffing his hat, said, "I understand, Captain Massey, that you want some more hands. My mate and I are ready to ship for the run home at the wages you are offering. We were left behind by the *Polly* privateer, and as she has been taken by the French, we want to join another ship; we've no fancy for a man-o'-war, and have had only ill luck in privateering. My name's John Green, and his is Thomas Routh; I've been to sea for pretty nearly ten years, and he's been fifteen or more afloat—so, without boasting, I may say we're both of us able hands."

"You give a very satisfactory account of yourself and your mate, John Green," observed Owen. "Have you any certificates from the last vessels you served in?"

"Unfortunately we left them on board the *Polly*, sir, and are not likely ever to see them again," answered the man—"and we might enter on board a man-o'-war, as you know, sir, without any questioning; though, if you don't take us, there are plenty of other masters who won't be so particular. But to say the truth, sir, knowing your character, we've a mind to sail with you."

"That's a fact," said the other man, who had not yet spoken, and who seemed to be much older than his companion, and a rough fellow—his big whiskers and shaggy locks almost concealing his features, though he might not have been ill-looking had his hair been moderately trimmed. Owen, calling his first mate, asked his opinion of the men, and they both agreed

that, as their story was probable and they had the cut of seamen, they were not likely to get better men. He accordingly entered them both. John Green was a fair-haired, ordinary-looking young man, rather more fluent of speech than might have been expected from his appearance, his countenance contrasting greatly with the hirsute, sunburnt visage of his mate.

Owen had finished his letters, and got them ready to send on shore by Dan. Among those for England were one for Captain Tracy and mother for Norah, for he could not tell when he might have another opportunity of writing. Soon afterwards the pilot came on board, the sails were loosed, the anchor hove short, and as soon as the boat returned the ship was got under way, and, the moon rising, she stood down the harbour with the wind abeam. As she got off Port Royal, the ship was hailed by a man-of-war's boat, and ordered to shorten sail; and the boat coming alongside, who should appear on deck but Gerald Tracy.

"I was sent to ascertain what ship this is, where you are bound to, and all other particulars; but as I happen to know, I needn't waste time in asking," said Gerald. "We've lost two or three hands lately, but as I know you've not got them, I needn't trouble you."

Owen felt considerable doubt whether he ought not to enlighten his careless young friend, whose duty it certainly was not to take anything for granted. However, he thought it very probable that if he did, he should lose some of his hands; they had come on board of their own accord, and he wanted them even more than did the *Champion*, which could easily supply their places. He therefore only replied that he was very glad Gerald had come, and as he was anxious to get to sea before the land wind failed, he should feel obliged if his young friend would make his visit as short as possible, and allow the ship to proceed.

"Yes, of course," answered Gerald; "but if you get home before I do, tell Norah that she may look out for a long letter, which I intend to write as soon as I have anything fresh to say. We hear that, while our ship is refitting, some of us are to be turned over to the *Augusta*, Captain Forrest; and as we are sure to have something to do, I shall have a long yarn to spin."

The young midshipman, who had been accompanied by Owen to the gangway, tumbled into his boat and pulled back to his ship, fully satisfied that he had done his duty. The harbour-master's boat having also paid the usual official visit and found all right, and the pilot having taken his departure, the *Ouzel Galley* stood

out to sea under all sail. The soft moonbeams shed a bright light on the calm waters, just rippled over by the breeze, the wavelets sparkling like frosted silver. Having gained a sufficient offing, the *Ouzel Galley* hauled up to the westward and stood along the coast, lofty ridges rising on her starboard hand, while the broad expanse of the Caribbean Sea stretched away on the larboard side. The watch was set in charge of the first mate, but Owen had no intention of turning in; for, although few enemies were likely to approach the coast of Jamaica, where a large fleet was known to be collected, still one might possibly run in, on the chance of finding a richly laden merchantman off her guard. It was necessary, therefore, to be on the watch. None, however, could approach them seaward without being discovered in good time; but an enemy's vessel might lie hidden behind one of the many headlands and points, or in some of the numerous creeks on the coast, and might sally forth when least expected, and endeavour to capture them if unprepared. The land wind lasted for an hour or more past midnight, when the *Ouzel Galley* lay becalmed, with little prospect of making progress till the sea breeze should set in in the morning. Owen at length, leaving the deck in charge of the second mate, lay down in his cabin, desiring to be called should any strange sail appear in sight. Daylight, however, returned, and when he left his cabin he found the crew following their usual occupations of the morning—washing decks, coiling down the ropes. On looking about for the new hands, to judge of them by the way they went about their work, he observed that the two last who had joined were flemishing the ropes down man-of-war fashion, as were two of the others; but the rest, those supplied by Mr Jobson, were evidently lubberly fellows, who scarcely know the stem from the stern of the ship.

"I must practise these men at their guns, or they will be of no use if it ever comes to a pinch," thought Owen. While he was watching the crew, the dark-whiskered man who had entered as Thomas Routh came aft, when Owen got a better look at his countenance than he had hitherto had. He started, for he fully believed that he saw before him O'Harrall, whose life he had twice been the means of saving. He looked again and again, not wishing, however, that the man should discover that he was especially noticing him; while the latter, apparently totally unconscious of being remarked, went on with his work. Still, it was not likely that O'Harrall had voluntarily come on board his ship. At last he determined to speak to the man, and to judge by his tone of voice and answers. He called him up.

"Have you ever served with me before?" he asked.

"No, sir, not that I know of, for I neither remember your features nor your name," was the answer.

"Have you ever served on board a man-of-war?" asked Owen.

"When I shipped aboard this craft I came to do duty as a seaman, not to answer questions about my previous life," said the man, looking up boldly into Owen's face. Owen turned away; the voice reminded him of O'Harrall as much as the countenance, and yet, from the man's perfect coolness, he could not suppose that he could be that person. Owen had no doubt, however, that he had served on board a man-of-war, and was probably a deserter, and that, should any naval officer come on board in search of deserters, the man would probably be taken. He determined, at all events, to watch the man and see how he behaved himself towards the rest of the crew. Owen was not long left in doubt, for, though Green had at first been put forward, it was very evident that the other was the leading spirit of the two. He was observed to be associating chiefly with the new men, and talking to them when no others were present, endeavouring, not unsuccessfully, to establish an influence over them. He did not, however, neglect the old hands, and whenever he had an opportunity he took pains to win their goodwill. To the officers he was obedient and submissive enough; and when, rounding Negril Head at the west end of the island, the ship was struck by a sudden squall, he showed by his activity and courage that he was a first-rate seaman. His manners, too, were above those of an ordinary sailor, and though rough in his exterior, he was neat and clean in his person.

The ship was running in for Montego Bay. Owen and his first mate had gone down to take a hurried dinner, when Dan came in to the cabin.

"Well, Dan, how do the new hands get on?" asked Owen.

"It's just that I want speak to you about, your honour," answered Dan. "There's not much to be said about most of them, except that they're pretty hard bargains; but there's one of them, Routh, who, if he isn't some great lord, will try to make the people believe that he is. It's only to be hoped that he means well, for if he takes it into his head to do any harm, he'll do it."

"Perhaps, after all, he may have no evil intentions. He certainly is one of our best men," observed Mr Fisher, the first mate.

"Your honour asked me to say what I thought of the men, and I've said it," answered Dan.

"We shall see how he behaves in harbour, and if there is no fault to find with him we can keep him on board," remarked Owen.

"Your honour knows what's best," observed Dan, speaking with the freedom of an old follower, "but I'll stake my davy that he's after no good."

"Well, Dan, Mr Fisher and I will keep an eye on him, and you can report anything further you see suspicious in his conduct," said Owen, as he and his mate returned on deck.

An hour afterwards the *Ouzel Galley* was at anchor in Montego Bay. Owen was just going on shore, when Mr Twigg, who had been waiting for the ship, came off and gave him directions about receiving his cargo. Owen reported that he had fully carried out his instructions, showed the guns he had procured, and mustered his crew.

"A likely set of fellows," observed Mr Twigg. "You'll do your duty, my lads, and, if you have to defend the ship, you'll fight bravely. Should you come back in her you may be sure of good wages; Ferris, Twigg, and Cash pay well when they are well served."

The crew cheered, and Routh, who stood foremost among them, was especially vociferous, though he might have been seen winking to some of his mates when the eyes of the worthy planter and the officers were turned away.

"You'll have the droghers alongside to-morrow morning, and you'll not be long in hoisting the casks on board, Captain Massey," continued Mr Twigg, as he walked the poop. "Meantime, I shall be happy to see you on shore, and should have been glad to take you to Bellevue, as Miss Ferris is anxious to send some messages to our fair friend Miss Tracy, who won all our hearts out here, as I understand she has that of another friend of ours." Mr Twigg chuckled, and Owen looked conscious. "However, as the distance is too great, Miss Ferris has intrusted me with letters for her friend, which I can safely confide to you."

Thus Mr Twigg talked on. "You will pass in sight of Bellevue as you run along the coast—we'll signal you, so that you can give the last report of your friends when you reach Dublin."

The invitation Owen had received was equivalent to a command, and, though he would have preferred remaining on board, he accompanied Mr Twigg on shore. He met at dinner several planters, agents of estates, or attorneys, as they were called; two or three brother skippers whose vessels lay in the harbour, a military officer, and a few nondescripts. The conversation was pretty general, though the subject of sugar and rum might have predominated, and Owen heard more about affairs in Jamaica than he had hitherto done. The blacks, he found, were in an unsatisfactory state; they had been discovered holding secret meetings of a suspicious character. They had more than once before revolted and committed most fearful atrocities; and one or two gentlemen expressed the fear that, unless precautions were taken in time, the black's might play the same trick again. Those gentlemen were, however, looked upon by the rest of the company as timid alarmists.

"The cowhide is the best specific for keeping the black rascals in order," exclaimed Mr Tony Grubbins, an attorney from a neighbouring estate, who looked as if he not unfrequently used that same weapon of offence. "We always know in good time what the negroes are about, for they haven't the sense to keep their own secrets; if they show any obstreperousness, we shall pretty quickly put them down."

"As there are ten blacks to one white man, if the negroes are combined we might find it not so easy a matter to put them down," observed one of the timid gentlemen.

"Pooh-pooh, sir!—show them the muzzle of a blunderbuss and they'll be off like a shot," answered the other.

From the remarks made by the timid gentleman, Owen felt, however, inclined to side with his opinion.

Captain Brown, of the good ship *Sarah Ann*, on hearing that Owen was to sail without convoy, warned him of the danger he would run. "All very well, sir," he observed, "when you get to the eastward of the islands, but you'll find out that you'll have to run the gauntlet of the enemy's cruisers, for they're pretty thick in these seas; and, in addition, there are not a few picarooning, piratical rascals who don't pretend even to be privateers, and boldly hoist the black flag, and rob and murder all they can capture."

"I hope that the *Ouzel Galley* can keep clear of them, as well as of the regular cruisers of the enemy," answered Owen. "We fell in with a gentleman of the sort on our passage out, but we had

fewer guns and hands than we have now, and we at first took him for one of our convoy, or we should have beaten him off without much difficulty."

"That is more than poor Wilkins, of the *Greyhound*, was able to do," remarked Captain Brown. "I was in company with him at sunset, when everything was well on board, and we were standing the same course—but next morning he was nowhere in sight, and my first mate, who had the middle watch, told me he saw two vessels astern instead of one. As no guns were heard, it's my belief that the *Greyhound* was taken by surprise and carried before the crew had time to fire a shot in their defence."

"Depend on it, we'll keep too sharp a look-out to be surprised," said Owen, "though I am obliged to you for the warning."

As the party was becoming a somewhat uproarious one, Owen, who both from principle and habit was a sober man, stole off and returned on board his ship. The mate reported all well, and that none of the crew had even asked leave to go on shore. When Dan, however, made his appearance in the cabin, he looked while he moved about as if he had something to communicate.

"What's the matter? Out with it, Dan," said Owen.

"Your honour, I don't want to be a talebearer," answered Dan, "but Routh and Green and the rest of their gang have been talking together the whole of the watch, and that means mischief."

"The more necessity for keeping a bright look-out on them," observed the captain, "and I have no doubt that the honest men in the ship will keep them down, whatever tricks they may play."

With a certain amount of uncomfortable feeling Owen turned in, keeping, as he always did, his pistol and sword by the side of his bed. The next day he was too busy taking in cargo to think of the matter; and now, being ready for sea, the *Ouzel Galley* stood out of the harbour.

According to arrangement with Mr Twigg, the *Ouzel Galley* kept along the coast till she came off Bellevue. As she appeared, a flag from the flagstaff on shore flew out to the breeze. Owen hoisted his colours and fired his guns, and the merchantman, looking as trim as a ship of war, sailed on her course.



"No fear about that young fellow making the voyage if any man can do it," observed Mr Twigg to Mr Ferris.

"He has been brought up under a good captain—a better we have not in our service," replied Mr Ferris.

Ellen watched the departing ship which was carrying her epistle to Norah. The weather was beautiful, though the heat was somewhat more oppressive than usual; a light breeze filled the sails of the *Ouzel Galley*, wafting her over the calm waters. It was scarcely possible to believe that she would have any dangers to encounter on that tranquil ocean.

A considerable number of persons inhabited the house of Bellevue. Besides Mr Twigg and his wife and the manager, there were six young gentlemen, book-keepers, who were so called though they had no books to keep, but were employed in superintending the various operations of the estate. Most of them were young men of respectable families, who looked forward to becoming managers or to holding other responsible offices. There were also several assistant overseers, mostly mulattoes, though some were whites—literally, slave-drivers—whose business was to keep the negroes up to their work in the fields. The book-keepers dined at table, and were treated in every respect as gentlemen, though the manager kept them under pretty strict discipline. One of them, Archie Sandys, a lively young Scotchman, was a favourite with Ellen, as he reminded her of Gerald Tracy. He was clever, too, and very well informed. That he admired her, there could be little doubt, for no one was more ready to obey her behests, though he might not have foolishly lost his heart or ventured to lift his eyes to one so much above him in fortune.

The *Ouzel Galley* was still in sight in the offing, when Archie, having performed his duties for the day, came in and found Ellen seated in the shade, inhaling what little air was moving. The scene was a lovely one. The house stood on a height looking over the sea; there was a lawn green as one in spring, with a shrubbery on either side of tropical trees and shrubs of varied and picturesque forms, above which towered several specimens of the graceful palm. Birds of gay plumage and butterflies of gorgeous hues were flitting about, and many magnificent flowers, such as are to be seen in hot-houses alone at home, were blooming around. Words, however, can never give an adequate description of West Indian scenery. Young Sandys made his bow to Miss Ferris, who greeted him with a smile.

"I am not intruding on you, I hope?" he said.

"Certainly not," she answered, laughing; and seeing that he was not expected to go away, he stood leaning against one of the pillars of the verandah.

"I witnessed a curious scene yesterday, which I have not before had an opportunity of describing," he said, after a few other remarks had passed between them. "I don't know what Mr Ferris or our manager will say to it; I consider myself fortunate in getting away with a whole skin. You perhaps, Miss Ferris, have never heard of a Jumby dance; I had, and wished to see one. Yesterday, one of our assistant overseers, a mulatto, Bob Kerlie by name, to whom I had rendered some service, told me that he had heard one was to take place on some wild ground between this and the next estate; and I persuaded him to act as my guide to the place. He told me that I must be careful what I said or did, as the negroes were in a very curious humour and might easily be offended. We carried our cutlasses, and I stuck a brace of pistols in my belt; besides which, we were each provided with a stout walking-stick. We started at sundown, and after leaving the cultivated ground we had no little difficulty in making our way through the tangled brushwood till we reached the hut in which the Jumby dance was to be performed. It stood under a vast cotton-tree, on an open space near the bank of the river which you see running into the ocean to the westward of this. As we went along Kerlie told me that the chief performer was a big negro, Cudjoe, reputed to be a powerful Obeah man; that is, a necromancer, or what the North American Indians would call a medicine-man. He is supposed to possess wonderful mysterious powers—to be able to cause the death of any one who offends him. Bob assured me that there was no doubt about this, and those he denounces never fail to die shortly afterwards. If such is the case, Master Cudjoe probably knows how to use poison to bring about the fulfilment of his predictions, and I am thankful that he does not belong to us.

"We found upwards of a hundred negroes, mostly men, though there were some women among them, all decked out in strange and uncouth ornaments, snakes' heads, dried frogs, various coloured beads forming necklaces round their throats; their garments were otherwise scanty in the extreme. They looked surprised and not very well pleased at seeing us, and Rob had some difficulty in persuading them that I only came for curiosity and was far too good-natured to say anything about what I might see which might get them into trouble. The assembly being pacified agreed to our remaining. I observed that there

was a great deal of talking among them, but as they spoke their native African, neither Rob nor I could understand what was said. The hut was of considerable size, though low and thatched merely with palm-leaves. There were no windows, and only one door; this was now thrown open, when what looked to me like a huge skeleton appeared at the entrance, and waved its bony arms wildly about, beckoning the people to enter. They started to their feet, for they had hitherto been squatting round, and rushed eagerly to the door. Rob and I followed, when we discovered that the seeming skeleton was the Obeah man, Cudjoe, who had thus painted his black body from head to foot. The hut was lighted by some twenty small lamps, hung from the roof, and in the centre was a figure intended to represent a human being, with an enormous cock's head. Master Cudjoe, if he was the artist, had contrived to produce as hideous-looking a monster as could well be imagined. 'That's the fetish,' whispered Rob; 'they worship it as if it were a god.'

"Cudjoe, on seeing us, asked in an angry tone what we wanted, and Rob spoke to him as he had done to the other people. 'Den you keep quiet, buccra,' he said, turning to me; 'I no hab laffee or talkee.' I assured him that I would remain as still as a mouse; and with a growl he retired again inside the hut, where he seated himself in front of a huge tom-tom, the African drum, and began slowly to beat it, chanting at the same time one of his native songs, I concluded. Gradually he beat faster and faster, accompanying the music, if such it could be called, with his voice. The spectators sat listening in rapt attention, when suddenly one of the women started up and began dancing, keeping capital time to the music. The faster Cudjoe played the faster she danced, till every limb and muscle seemed in movement. Round and round she went in front of the hideous fetish: no dervish of the East could have danced more furiously. Presently she was joined by a man, who danced in the same manner round and round her. One after the other, the whole of the women, with partners, took a part in the performance; I could scarcely follow their dark figures, except by the ornaments they wore, as they moved in eccentric courses within the hut, the tom-tom beating louder and louder, and the people moving faster. The spectators had hitherto sat quiet; they at length rose, and were, I saw, apparently about to join in the saturnalia. Just then Rob touched me on the arm and whispered, 'Come away, sir; I heard something which told me it will not be safe to remain here longer.' As I had no wish to be offered up as a sacrifice to the fetish I followed his advice, and as fast as we could move along we made our way back to the open. On inquiring of Rob what he had heard, he told me that

the negroes were cursing the white men, and were praying to the fetish to assist them in some design or other they had on foot. Rob even thought that in their excitement they might seize us and put us to death. He was so earnest in the matter that he convinced me he did not speak without sufficient cause. I don't wish to alarm you, Miss Ferris, but I want you to try and induce your father to take precautions against any sudden outbreak of the blacks. Our manager holds them in such supreme contempt that he wouldn't listen to what I have to say, and would only laugh at me and call me a second-sight Scotchman. Even the hundred negroes I saw assembled might commit a great deal of mischief; and there may be many hundreds more united with them: numbers arrived while we were there, and others were coming in as we made our escape."

"I certainly think you are right, Mr Sandys, in not despising the warning given by the overseer," said Ellen. "I will tell my father what you have said to me, and ask him to speak to you on the subject, and he will probably examine Rob Kerlie. It will surely be wise to be on our guard, even should the negroes not really be meditating mischief. I confess that what you have told me has made me somewhat anxious; this hot evening is not calculated to rise one's spirits. Tell me, Mr Sandys, is the air often as oppressive as it is at present?"

"No, certainly. It is very hot indeed; I suspect that we are going to have a storm," answered Archie. "I observed this morning curiously shaped clouds high up in the sky, which suddenly dispersed from every point of the compass. I have been for some minutes, watching a bank of clouds rising above the horizon in the north-west, and it has gained a considerable height since we were speaking; it seems to have swept round the western end of the island."

Ellen looked in the direction indicated; just then a vivid flash of lightning burst from the dark bank of clouds in the west, followed almost without interval by several others, and in a few minutes the tops of the tall palms bent before a sudden blast which came rushing from the westward. Every instant it increased in fury; the leaves torn from the trees filled the air, succeeded by branches, many of considerable size.

"I must advise you, Miss Ferris, to take shelter within the house," said Archie, "for one of those branches might injure you severely. Even the verandah itself may be blown away. You have little conception of the power of a West Indian hurricane."

As Ellen was hurrying into the house she met her father coming to look for her.

"I am afraid we are going to have a violent storm, of which this wind is only the precursor," he said. "We must seek for safety in the strongest part of the house; it will not be safe to remain in the open air, or even near the window, through which a branch or any other object may be blown."

Ellen had accompanied her father to the dining-hall, which, being in the centre of the house, was less exposed to danger than any other part of the building. So loudly did the wind roar that even there it was necessary to speak in a high tone to be heard.

"Oh, what will become of the *Ouzel Galley* if she is caught in this fearful gale!" exclaimed Ellen.

"She has by this time, I hope, gained a good offing; if the wind holds as it now does, she will be able to run before it till she is out of danger," answered Mr Ferris.

As the evening was now drawing rapidly on, the manager and book-keepers came in from the works in the different parts of the estate. They all looked somewhat anxious, though no damage had yet been done, and a hope was entertained that it was not going to be anything serious after all. Their spirits revived when suddenly the wind ceased and the atmosphere became as clear as usual. Two or three of them had, however, again to go out; and on their return they reported that the sky was once more overcast, and that it was lightening in all quarters. Presently the rain came down in true tropical fashion, again to stop and again to go on with greater energy than before. Sometimes it was perfectly calm, but the lightning continued darting forth from the sky with awful grandeur; sometimes the whole upper regions of the air were illuminated by incessant flashes, but the quivering sheet of blazing fire was far surpassed in brilliancy by the electric fluid which was exploding in every direction. Ellen and her father and young Sandys were standing as near one of the windows as they could venture, when they saw a meteor of deep red hue and globular form descending perpendicularly from an enormous height. As it approached the earth its motion appeared to be accelerated, and it then became of dazzling whiteness, elongating in form till, dashing on the ground, it splashed around like molten lead or quicksilver and disappeared. The next instant the hurricane again burst forth, rushing amid the trees with the sound of a heartrending and piercing scream, so loud as entirely to drown

the human voice. The whole building shook and trembled as if an earthquake was taking place and it was about to be hurled to the ground. Mr Ferris, seizing Ellen's arm, dragged her into a doorway.

"Should the house not withstand this furious blast, we shall be safer here than anywhere else," he said.

Young Sandys followed them. Mr Twigg, with his wife and children, was at the time in another room. Ellen naturally felt anxious for her friends, and young Sandys offered to go and ascertain how they were getting on. He quickly returned with the report that they were all safe, and that the children were clinging round their parents, overcome with terror, and shrieking piteously. No thunder was at any time heard, and all agreed that even if the whole battery of a line-of-battle ship had been going off, the sound would not have been distinguished above the horrible roar and yelling of the wind and the noise of the ocean, as its tumultuous waves dashed on the shore, threatening every instant to sweep over the land and engulf all within their reach. The wind continually shifted, now blowing from one quarter, now from another. Suddenly the deafening noise sank into a solemn murmur, and the lightning, which had hitherto played in flashes and forked darts, hovered for a few seconds between the clouds and the earth, circling round and round, causing the whole heavens to appear on fire, when a similar luminous appearance seemed to burst from the ground, and, rising, the mass rushed upwards to the sky. After a short interval, again was felt the breath of the whirlwind with even greater fury than before, and it seemed as if everything on the face of the earth would be swept away into the boiling ocean. Again the earth was shaken, and the house vibrated with a violence which threatened its instant destruction. Mr Ferris kept a firm hold of his daughter's arm, and she, in a way which surprised him as well as herself, maintained her composure during the whole of this fearful strife of the elements. Not till daylight returned did the fury of the tempest altogether cease; sometimes it abated, again to burst forth with almost the same power as before. The house itself, having been strongly built and the roof fixed on with the greatest care, withstood the hurricane, a portion only at one end having been blown off; but the out-buildings were materially damaged. Mr Ferris and his managers waited anxiously to hear a report of the damage which had been done to the estate. Round the house many trees had been torn from their roots, others snapped short off, and all had more or less suffered. The ocean still continued to rage with unabated fury, even after the wind itself had ceased

Ellen naturally looked along the horizon, but not a sail was in sight, and again and again she asked what could have become of the *Ouzel Galley*. Her affection for Norah made her feel as if she was herself personally interested in the fate of the brave young commander, as much as Mr Ferris was in reality in that of the ship. He could no longer conceal his anxiety about the *Ouzel Galley*. How she had fared was the subject of earnest discussion between him and Mr Twigg. The latter thought it just possible that she might have got beyond the influence of the hurricane before it burst with its full fury; and if not, might have weathered it out, as many a stout ship with plenty of sea room had weathered similar hurricanes before. He acknowledged, however, that she might have been caught by it, and if so, while the wind blew from the northward, might have been driven on shore. The latter point would in time be ascertained, and as soon as possible a messenger was despatched along the coast, who, though he reported several shipwrecks, had ascertained that the *Ouzel Galley* was not among them.

"She was well found and not overladen, and as well able to keep afloat, even in such a sea as we saw running, as any ship which ever sailed the ocean," observed Mr Ferris. "We shall hear, I trust, in due course of her arrival."

Dreadful as the hurricane had appeared, the damage done was not as great as might have been expected. It was the opinion of many that only the tail of the hurricane had passed over the island. It was bad enough as it was. In some places the country appeared as if scorched by fire, in others the crops were totally destroyed; numerous buildings were levelled with the ground, and the trees and shrubs uprooted; a number of people had been killed, and many more seriously injured, by being struck by shingles from the roofs or branches from the trees, and by other hard substances which went hurtling like cannon-shot through the air. So rapid, however, is vegetation in the tropics that nature herself would repair much of the damage produced, and the industry of man the remainder—although the proprietors had to suffer severely in their pockets, while there was no power to restore to life the unhappy beings who had been killed.

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## Chapter Twelve.

**Captain Tracy and Norah at home—A letter from Gerald—His adventures—A cruise off Hispaniola—Engagement with a**

**French squadron—The enemy put to flight—Death of a young midshipman—Return to Port Royal—A second cruise, and capture of several rich merchantmen—Gerald in command of the *Flora*—His steward Peter—More tidings of the pirates—The *Champion* sent with despatches to the Leeward Islands—Joins the *Buckingham* in attacking a fort at Martinico—Generous conduct of Captain Tyrrell—Peter's narrative—His capture by pirates, and escape.**

Norah and her father had for many months been living an uneventful life in their pretty little cottage near Waterford. She was his constant companion; indeed, she never ventured out without him. Things had come to a pretty pass, as he observed, when a young lady couldn't take a walk by herself without the risk of being carried off by a party of filibustering squireens, quite as bad in their way as the picarooning rascals in the West Indies and on the Spanish Main, who had often in days of yore given him so much anxiety—not that they ever had caught him, for he was too much on his guard, though he had been chased well-nigh a score of times; and he intended to be on his guard now, and, as he hoped, with the same success.

This state of things, therefore, did not much concern him, as he was glad of Norah's society, and was always as ready to walk with her as she was with him. Their walks, indeed, seldom extended much beyond Waterford, or the often-trod road to Widow Massey's house. Norah never passed many days without paying her a visit. They were now looking forward to receiving news of Owen, or indeed, as they hoped, seeing him himself, as the *Ouzel Galley*, unless detained longer than was expected, would some time since have commenced her homeward voyage. A letter had come from Gerald saying that he had just seen her on her way round to Montego Bay, and giving an account of himself and what he had seen and done up to that time. He promised to write a longer letter when he had more to say. A couple of months or more after the arrival of Gerald's first letter another was received from him.

"Dear sister Norah," it ran, "I promised to spin you a long yarn, so here goes, and I hope that you'll get it some day. I told you in my last that I had seen the *Ouzel Galley* under way from Montego Bay, and I suppose Owen has long before this delivered all the messages I sent by him; and if not, I dare say he will before long, if he hasn't forgotten them. No matter; they were not very important, so you needn't scold him for his negligence.



"I forget if I told you that, while our ship was undergoing repairs in dock at Port Royal, Lieutenant Foley, Molly—I mean Lord Mountstephen—with Nat Kiddle and me, and about twenty of our hands, were turned over to the *Augusta*, 60-gun ship, commanded by Captain Forrest; and immediately afterwards were ordered to proceed to sea, accompanied by two other ships under his orders, the *Edinburgh*, of sixty-four guns, Captain Langdon, and the *Dreadnought*, of sixty guns, Captain Morris Suckling. We soon found that we were to cruise off Cape François, on the north coast of Saint Domingo, to watch a French squadron under Commodore De Kearsaint, who was collecting a large number of merchantmen which he was to convoy from that port to Europe. The admiral had been informed that the French had only three line-of-battle ships, which, although somewhat larger than we were, he knew very well that we should thrash if we could come up with them. We gained intelligence, however, from a French despatch vessel which we captured, that the enemy's squadron had lately been increased by four other ships, one of which, by-the-by, was a ship of ours—the *Greenwich*—of fifty guns, captured a few months ago, when commanded by Captain Roddam, off this very island. He had nothing to be ashamed of, for with his single ship he bravely faced five sail of the line and several frigates, and wasn't taken till he had lost all chance of escaping except by going to the bottom. Thus, you see, the French had seven ships to our three, and we heard besides that they had been strongly manned by volunteers from the garrison and merchant vessels, and made sure that they should either drive us away or capture us.

"Notwithstanding the superiority of the enemy, we were not to be put to flight, but kept our ground as if no Frenchmen were in the neighbourhood. We had been for some days cruising off the cape, always near enough to keep the port in sight, so that no vessel could steal out without our knowing it, when early in the morning the *Dreadnought*, which was inshore of us, made the signal that the enemy was in sight, and before noon we could see the whole French squadron standing out in line towards us, the wind being about north-east—if you get the chart, father will explain matters to you. We were to windward of them, keeping close together, though not so close as the Frenchmen, who seemed very anxious to be backing up each other. Our captain now made the signal for the other two captains to come on board the *Augusta*. As soon as they stepped on the quarter-deck, Captain Forrest, after shaking hands, said, 'Well, gentlemen, you see the Frenchmen are come out to engage us.' On which Captain Suckling quickly replied, 'I think it would be a

pity to disappoint them.' 'And what do you say?' asked our captain, turning to Captain Langdon. 'I heartily agree with Captain Suckling,' was the answer. 'If we disable them, we shall do good service by preventing them from convoying the merchant vessels, and maybe we shall take one or two of them. Of one thing I feel very sure, that they won't take us.'

"The three captains being agreed, the other two went back to their ships, and we hoisted the signal to make all sail and to close the enemy. The *Dreadnought* led in our line; the *Intrepide*, the French commodore's ship, led in that of the enemy, followed by the *Greenwich*. The wind was light, and it seemed to me that we should never get into action. Though I've seen a good deal of fighting on a small scale, yet this affair was likely to prove more serious than any I had yet engaged in. I was stationed on the main-deck, and the scene was very different to what I had been accustomed to on board the *Champion* where we've no deck above us and can see everything that is going forward. Here, it was only by looking through a port that I could get a glimpse of the enemy's ships, as they stood on in a long line, one closely following the other—so closely, indeed, that the leading ship had the jibboom end of the one next her in line almost over her taffrail. Molly, Kiddle, and I had charge of the guns manned by the *Champion's* people. We reminded them that they must show what they were made of, and maintain the honour of the little ship; they one and all answered that they would; and they looked as if they intended to keep to their word, as they stood with their shirts off, handkerchiefs bound round their heads, and belts round their waists, ready to fire as soon as the order should be given. In a line behind where we stood were the powder-boys seated on their tubs, cracking jokes, and seeming altogether to forget that we should have, in a few minutes, showers of round shot rattling about our ears. Though we used to call Mountstephen Molly, he didn't look a bit like a Molly now, for he walked the deck as calm and composed as if nothing particular was going to happen. I asked him what o'clock it was. He said, 'Twenty minutes past three.' Just then the *Dreadnought* opened her fire on the French commodore; and didn't Captain Suckling pound him—knocking away in a few minutes several of his spars, and so wounding his rigging that he fell on board the *Greenwich*, which, as I said, was close astern of him. As the *Dreadnought* stood on, we got up, and the word to fire was passed along our decks; and you may be sure we quickly obeyed it, blazing away at the two French ships already foul of each other, when they drove down upon the third astern, and there all three lay, unable to get clear one of the other.

"The French had a 64 and a 44 gun ship, besides two 32-gun frigates, which were able to manoeuvre, and these, as you may suppose, did not remain quiet while the *Augusta* and *Edinburgh* were blazing away at the three ships, which still lay jammed together. It made the fight, however, more equal than it would otherwise have been. Their shot came on board us pretty thickly, and not a few of our men were struck down. Among them was our first lieutenant, who raised his hand for a moment, and then fell back, dead. Soon afterwards I saw poor Mountstephen fall; I ran to help him, when I found that one of his legs had been shot away and the other fearfully injured. I ordered a couple of men to carry him below; I should have liked to go with him, poor fellow, but I couldn't leave the deck. I had returned to my station, when I found myself suddenly splashed all over with what I thought was water, though it was rather warm.

"'What, Paddy Tracy, are you wounded?' I heard Nat Kiddle sing out.

"'Not that I know of,' I answered; 'I don't feel like it.' Then I saw what had happened—a man standing close to me had been cut right in two by a round shot, which came through the port, wounding a couple of men besides.

"Much as the enemy were knocked about, we were already in a pretty bad condition, having all our masts, sails, rigging, and boats considerably damaged, eight or ten men killed, and nearly thirty wounded. If it hadn't been for the four ships of the enemy still able to manoeuvre, we should have taken or sunk the other three, for they couldn't manage to get free of each other, while they could only now and then fire a few shot at us. At length, to our infinite satisfaction, we saw the masts of the 64 engaged with the *Dreadnought* go over the side, while all the line-of-battle ships were evidently tremendously knocked about both in hull and rigging. We had been engaged for upwards of two hours, when the French commodore made a signal to one of the frigates, which, coming up, took him in tow and carried him out of action; and his example was followed by the whole of the French squadron, which made sail for Cape François, then to leeward of them.

"The *Edinburgh* had been as much damaged in her masts, yards, and sails as we were, and Captain Langdon signalled that she had also several shot in her hull. The *Dreadnought*, we saw, had lost her main and mizen topmasts, while nearly all her other masts and yards were greatly injured, and she also had received many shot in her hull, besides having lost as many

men as we had. This made Captain Forrest refrain from following the Frenchmen.

"I was very glad to find Mr Foley all right, for his own sake, for I like him very much—and still more for that of Miss Ferris, for it would be a terrible thing for her were he to be killed, and I hope he won't, though we all run the risk of losing the number of our mess. As soon as I could leave my station I ran down below to see how poor Mountstephen was getting on. He was perfectly sensible, though pale as a sheet. He said he felt no pain. His first question was, 'What are the enemy about?'

"'They're running,' I replied.

"'What, all seven of them?' he asked.

"'Yes, every one,' I answered.

"'Hurrah!' he exclaimed, waving his hand above his head, 'we've gained the victory.'

"Scarcely were the words out of his mouth than he fell back, and before the doctor could come to him he was dead.

"When I got on deck again—and I can tell you I was very glad to breathe some fresh air, after being down in that dreadful cockpit, full of poor fellows groaning with pain, some having their legs and arms cut off, others with their sides torn open or heads fearfully smashed—I found that the enemy were out of our reach, and that not one of our three ships was in a condition to follow them. This was very provoking, though we had fought a right gallant action, of that there can be no doubt. Captain Forrest seeing that, if we got to leeward, we should be unable to beat off, and very likely be driven on shore and lost, ordered a course to be steered for Jamaica, where we arrived in a couple of days. The admiral highly approved of what had been done, and Captain Forrest received orders to get his ship repaired with all despatch and return as soon as possible in search of the enemy. The hands were taken off our sloop for this purpose, and there seemed every probability of our remaining some time longer on board the *Augusta*. Still, things are not done so quickly out here as they are in the dockyards at home. At last we got to sea and sailed for Cape François. On looking into that port we found that the Frenchmen had put their best legs foremost, and that Monsieur De Kearsaint, having repaired his ships, had some days before sailed with the convoy for Europe, and we should have no chance of overtaking him. We had accordingly to come back, when we again sailed

with the admiral, whose flag was flying on board the *Marlborough*, for a cruise off Cape Tibéron. I should make my letter too long if I were to describe all that took place. We had not been many days on the station before we captured two French privateers, and from their crews learned that a rich convoy was preparing at Port au Prince to sail for Europe, under the protection of two large armed private ships. The admiral on this sent in his tender to ascertain if such was the fact. Her commander, who speaks French, managed to gain all the intelligence he required; he soon returned, having ascertained that the information received was correct. The admiral accordingly directed us to proceed off the island of Golavé, to cruise there for two days, and, should we see anything of the convoy at the expiration of that time, to return and join him. Golavé, you will understand, is in the middle of the large bay which occupies nearly the whole western coast of Saint Domingo, to the northward of Cape Tibéron.

"The afternoon of the day following our arrival, we had got well up into the bay, when we caught sight of two sloops. To prevent them from taking us for what we were, we hoisted Dutch colours and stood away from them. In the evening we sighted seven more sail steering out of the bay. On this, to deceive the enemy, we hung tarpaulins over the sides of the ship, set the sails in lubberly fashion, and, hauling our wind, stood away from the strangers till dark. We then again made sail and followed them. At ten o'clock we saw two more sail, one of which fired a gun, and the other then parted company and steered for Leogane. Soon afterwards eight more sail were seen to leeward. We had not lost sight of the ship which had fired a gun; though she might have suspected our character, she did not stand away from us. We accordingly soon ran up alongside, when Captain Forrest shouted out to him in French to strike, adding, 'If you alarm the other ships, or let them discover by any means what we are, we'll send you forthwith to the bottom.'

"The French commander, fully believing that our captain would put his threat into execution, immediately gave in; and one of our lieutenants, with thirty-five men, went on board the prize with orders to proceed off Petit Guave, a small port to leeward, to prevent any of the other vessels from escaping into it. The vessel we had captured was the *Mars*, of twenty-two guns and 108 men, all of whom we had now aboard us, stowed away below lest they should be making signals to the enemy. We stood on during the remainder of the night, and at daylight found ourselves in the midst of the convoy, which, on our

hoisting our colours and showing what we were about, began firing at us; but we quickly silenced them one after the other, and in the course of a few minutes the whole struck, one small vessel alone managing to get away. There were altogether eight vessels, richly laden, each carrying from eight to ten guns. We had to take out their crews and man them from our ship. The captain, sending for me, greatly to my satisfaction, ordered me to take charge of one of them, called the *Flora*. Tumbling into one of the boats with ten hands, I quickly pulled aboard, and found that she carried twelve guns and a crew of thirty-five men. The Frenchmen looked very glum when I told them that they were to get into the boat and go aboard our ship. I kept one of them, a black, Pierre by name, who spoke English and had been the captain's steward. The first service he did me was to act as interpreter, and as he knew where everything was stowed, I thought he would be useful in other respects. Through him I made a polite speech to the captain, and told him that I was sorry to turn him out of his ship, but that I was obeying orders. He shrugged his shoulders, observing that it was the fortune of war, when, bowing, he followed his men over the side. I wasn't sorry to get rid of the Frenchmen, for it would have been a hard matter to keep them in order and navigate the ship with the few hands I had.

"As soon as we had transferred the prisoners, the prizes were ordered to make sail, and together we stood out of the bay. A very pretty sight we presented as we ran on under all sail, keeping, according to orders, close to the *Augusta*. Our prizes were richly laden, and the admiral, as may be supposed, was highly pleased when we sighted him off Cape Tibéron and Captain Forrest told him what we had done, as his share of the prize would be something considerable. Mine, as a midshipman, would be a couple of hundred pounds; Mr Foley, as a lieutenant, will get two or three thousand; so you may fancy what the shares of the captain and admiral will be.

"Pierre was, I found, an excellent cook as well as steward. I now called him Peter, by-the-by, at his own request, for as he observed, 'Now, massa, I come among Englishmen I take English name, please;' and so Peter he is now always called. He was especially fond of keeping his tongue wagging; he seemed not at all sorry to have changed masters, and to have got on board a man-of-war instead of a merchantman. He said that on their voyage out, when coming through the Windward Passage, the *Flora* and another vessel, the *Cerf*, of smaller size, carrying only eight guns, had been attacked by a piratical craft. They fought for some time, when the *Flora* made off, leaving the *Cerf*

to her fate—that the pirates boarded her, and that he had seen her go down—that the pirate ship then made chase after the *Flora*, but by carrying all sail, and night coming on, she escaped. By Peter's account, I suspect that she must be the same craft which attacked the *Ouzel Galley*. Peter says she has a crew of a hundred men and carries twenty guns. She is known to have captured several merchantmen; some she sends to the bottom, and others she takes into one of the numerous keys among the Bahamas, where they are hidden away as securely as they would be among the unknown islands of the Pacific or Indian Ocean. From various things which Peter said, I had an idea that he knew more about the pirate than he had hitherto communicated, and I determined, when I had more completely gained his confidence, to try and obtain all the information he possessed.

"The weather continued fine, and our little squadron making good way, we were all soon safely at anchor in Port Royal harbour. It was a jovial sight, let me tell you, as we sailed in with English colours above the French on board the prizes, the guns firing, the flags flying, and the people on shore cheering. We at once carried the prizes up to Kingston, where they were quickly sold for good round sums, for they were all richly laden. As soon as I get my prize-money, I intend to send it home to father. Tell him to do as he thinks best with it; I don't want to spend it here, as many of our men probably will before long. The Jamaica people seldom get so good a haul as this, though prizes are being brought in almost every week. Where the money all goes to, I don't know; it makes somebody rich, I suppose.

"I was disappointed at not seeing Mr and Miss Ferris, and so, I have no doubt, was Mr Foley, for we thought that they would be back here by this time; but they are still away on the other side of the island. I don't think I told you that there had been a hurricane here, while we were cruising off Cape François, before our action with the Frenchmen. It was not felt very severely at this end of the island, as they only got the whisk of its tail; but at the west end it did a great deal of damage, and a number of people were killed and wounded, though I am happy to say that our friends escaped any injury. The *Ouzel Galley*, I understand, had sailed, and, I hope, had got well to the eastward before it came on. I dare say that Owen Massey will have told you all about it long before you get this. The worst news I have to give you is respecting the slaves, who are in a very rebellious state. It is rumoured that in one or two places they have attacked the whites' houses and killed several people; but this is not

believed, and it is said that they know too well what a fearful punishment would overtake them were they to do anything of the sort.

"To return to my own proceedings. As soon as I had handed the *Flora* over to the prize agent, I had to turn again into a midshipman and to go on board our own tight little sloop, which had just come out of dock and was now all at sea, ready for sea. I got leave to take Peter with me, as he wished to enter on board a British ship of war; he was at once appointed midshipmen's steward, and a better one we never had.

"Mr Foley was hoping that we should be sent to cruise off the north coast of the island, but instead of that we were ordered to carry despatches to Commodore Moore, who commands on the Leeward Islands station. Having delivered them, we were on our way back, when we fell in with the *Buckingham*, Captain Tyrrell. While in company with her we captured a French merchantman, and her crew being brought on board our ship, Peter heard from some of them that four privateers had run in for shelter under a strong battery in Grand Anse Bay, on the island of Martinico. He having told me, I at once gave information to our commander, who forthwith went on board the *Buckingham* to communicate it to Captain Tyrrell, and he at once resolved to stand in and destroy the privateers and the fort. Our prisoners, who had no idea that what they had been talking about had been understood, were very much astonished at seeing us suddenly alter our course and steer in for the bay. There, sure enough, were the four privateers with springs on their cables, and their guns run out, anchored under a strong-looking fort, mounting ten guns at least. The *Buckingham* ran in as close as she could venture, when she dropped her anchor, and we brought up under her stern and immediately began blazing away at the vessels, which, as well as the fort, opened fire on us. Though the privateers each mounted not less than twenty guns, they could not long stand the *Buckingham's* heavy shot; indeed, had we been alone we should have taken them. Still, thinking that the fort would drive us away, they held out longer than we had expected. Though we were struck several times, and a good many round shot passed between our masts, not a man on board was hit. We were wondering when they would give in, when, as a puff of air cleared the smoke off for a few seconds, we observed that one of them had a list to starboard. Her next broadside again concealed her from view, and in a couple of minutes, when the wind again blew away the smoke, all we could see were her masts as she slowly went to the bottom. I was expecting that the rest would share the same fate; one of



them was to meet with a more terrible disaster—almost the next instant a thundering sound was heard, flames burst out of her deck, her masts shot upwards like sky-rockets, and the whole air seemed filled with fragments of wreck, which came hissing down into the water, several portions, whizzing through the air, reaching almost to where we lay. The other two, seeing the hopelessness of further resistance, after firing their broadsides, hauled down their colours. On this the *Buckingham* made a signal to us to take possession of the two vessels. 'Out boats!' was the order; and in another minute three of our boats, I having charge of one of them, were dashing through the calm water, while the *Buckingham* continued engaging the fort, which still held out. Two or three of its guns, however, had been disabled, and its fire began to slacken. We pulled away as fast as the crews could lay their backs to the oars, fearing that the Frenchmen would set fire to the ships and deprive us of our prizes. Their boats were already in the water, and the men were tumbling into them, evidently in a hurry to make their escape. 'Look out, lads; that the rascals play no tricks, and lose no time in seeing that all's safe below!' sang out Mr Foley, as he dashed by in the gig towards the northernmost of the vessels. I was making for the one to the southward, the farthest from the fort. We were soon up to her, and as we scrambled up on one side we saw several of her crew toppling over on the other. Just then I caught sight of a man coming up the companion-hatchway; it struck me that he had been about some mischief, and leaping on him, I tumbled him down to the foot of the ladder. He had a slow-match in his hand, which, hissing and spluttering, set his clothes on fire.

"What have you been about, you rascal?" I exclaimed, though I don't suppose he understood the question. He pointed to the door of a cabin from which smoke was issuing. I burst it open, and found a match lighted, leading to a suspicious-looking cask in the corner. I, as you may suppose, pulled it out in pretty quick time; and, throwing it into the middle of the main cabin, sang out for buckets of water. A couple were quickly handed down, and the fire was extinguished. In another moment, however, we should all have been blown into the air. The Frenchman, who proved to be the mate of the vessel, was severely burnt, but little compassion was felt for him. We secured him, and two other men, who were caught by the legs as they were leaping overboard.

"Our men had begun to fire at the boats which had shoved off, but I ordered them to desist, as the Frenchmen had hauled

down their flag, and were perfectly right in trying to make their escape.

"As soon as the garrison of the fort saw that we had possession of the vessels, they opened fire at us with one of their guns. On this, Mr Foley ordered me to cut the cable of my prize, and make sail out of harm's way, as the wind was sufficiently off shore to enable us to do so. He at the same time, I saw, was setting the canvas of the ship he had taken.

"The *Buckingham* and *Champion* having now only the fort to attend to, poured in so hot a fire on it that the gun which was annoying us was dismounted before we had been under way more than four or five minutes. So we again brought up and turned our guns at the fort, which was gradually crumbling away before the iron shower thrown into it. As the Frenchmen still kept up a hot fire from four or five guns, which considerably annoyed the *Buckingham*, Captain Tyrrell ordered the boats away to storm the fort and put an end to the conflict. I immediately jumped into my boat, leaving the prize at anchor to take care of herself, and joined the others, which were pulling to the shore on that side of the fort where the chief breach had been effected, and where none of the remaining guns could reach us and out of range of musket-shot. Captain Tyrrell himself, I found, was heading the party. We mustered altogether upwards of a hundred and fifty men, about forty of whom belonged to our ship, with Mr Foley and other officers. The marines quickly formed, flanked by our blue jackets, armed with muskets, cutlasses, and pistols. The instant the last man leaped on shore, the order to advance was given, and up the hill we went at double quick march, in spite of a shower of musket balls which came whizzing about our ears. The Frenchmen endeavoured to slew round some of their guns to fire down on us, but before the muzzles were run through the embrasures, we were climbing over the parapet in a somewhat helter-skelter fashion, and, headed by the gallant captain of the *Buckingham*, leaping down into the fort. So rapid had been our advance that the soldiers had no time to reload their pieces, and as our cutlasses flashed in their faces, they hurled them at us and took to flight, endeavouring to make their way out at a gate on the land side, where, in their hurry, they got jammed together and stopped by part of the crews of the two privateers, who were coming in to their assistance. Fortunately for them, their commandant, after exchanging a few passes with Captain Tyrrell, had been disarmed and made prisoner; and he, seeing that if followed by our men they would be cut to pieces, shouted out to them to come back and submit as he had done. Still they

pushed on, and in their struggles to get out, toppled over each other till a dozen or more lay sprawling on the ground. They would there have been destroyed had not Captain Tyrrell humanely called off his people. Of the whole of our party, not a man had been killed, and a few only were wounded. The fort exhibited a woeful picture of ruin—nearly a score of men lay dead close to the guns, while we saw other corpses scattered about in different parts of the fort. The buildings which served as habitations for the garrison were shattered to pieces, the embrasures knocked into one, the guns dismounted and their carriages broken, the flagstaff shot in two—indeed, it seemed a wonder that the Frenchmen could have held out so long.

"We could see from the ramparts a good-sized town on the banks of a river, some way from the shore, sheltered by groves of palms and other trees—a very attractive, pleasant-looking place. Finding themselves masters of the fort, our men gave three cheers; then the cry arose that they should go down and attack the town and pillage it. When the captain heard this, he shouted out to the men, 'My fine fellows, I hear what you say, and I hope you will not longer think of doing that same. You will agree that it is beneath us to make a number of poor people miserable by destroying their houses and such comforts of life as they possess. Remember, you are Englishmen, and should scorn to injure people who, though they are called our enemies, have not lifted even a finger against us. Let them remain in quiet; they will bless you, and wish you well.'

"This considerate speech had a good effect. The men cheered, and said they had no wish to hurt the mounseers. The captain, allowing the commandant to follow his people, who had made their escape, then set us to work to demolish the fort. The guns which appeared serviceable were spiked, and then rolled down the hill into the sea, and mines were dug in different parts of the fort, in which all the powder we found in the magazine was stowed. A train was then laid to each mine, and we were ordered to march down to the boats. Captain Tyrrell, who had superintended all the operations himself, was the last to leave; he lighted the train, and then followed us. We hadn't got many yards from the beach when a loud report was heard, and up went a part of the fort, quickly followed by the other portions, like the joints in a cracker; and when the smoke and dust cleared off, the whole spot where the fort had stood was a heap of ruins. It would take the Frenchmen a good many weeks to repair the damage, if they should ever think it worth while to make the attempt.

"The wind was so light that we were unable to get out of the bay; in the evening we saw a boat coming off to us with a flag of truce. She contained two of the principal inhabitants of the town, who brought with them a cargo of fowls, and vegetables, and fruit, which they begged the captain to accept as a mark of their gratitude for his having spared their town. They added that another would shortly follow for the corvette. Captain Tyrrell made a suitable speech, accepting their present. The other boats soon arrived with the promised supply for us, and as we took leave in the most friendly manner of the people who brought it, no one would have supposed the sort of work we had been engaged in during the morning.

"A land breeze enabled us to get to sea that evening, when soon afterwards we parted company with the *Buckingham*, we shaping a course back to Jamaica. We were all very jolly on board, for we had plenty of provisions, and had unexpectedly come in for a nice little lump of prize-money.

"I must tell you that Peter had become a great favourite on board, and of this he himself seemed well aware, though he wisely never presumed on it. I had, as I told you, been curious to find out how he was so well acquainted with the haunts of the pirates. At last, one day, I asked him, when I happened to be alone in the berth and he had come to get something out of a locker.

"'Me tell you, Massa Tracy, for me now know berry well you my friend,' he answered.

"'You're right, Peter,' I replied, 'and you may be sure that from nothing you say will you criminate yourself.'

"'Me only tell de truth on de honour of gentleman;' and Peter put his hand on his heart as he had seen the Frenchmen do.

"'Heave ahead, Peter,' I said, 'or your yarn may be out short.'

"'Berry well, Massa Tracy,' said Peter. 'It happen dis way. I was 'board a French ship, *Les deux Amis*, bound from Bordeaux to Port au Prince, when just as we 'bout twenty league to de eastward ob San Domingo, keeping a look-out dat no English cruiser pick us up, we see one evening, just as de sun go down, a big ship from de nor'ard standing for us. De cappen say she French—de mate say she Spanish—some ob de men say she Dutch—oders strife she English—I not know what to tink. De cappen say, "Best make all sail and stand 'way." So we did; but de bell just strike two in de fust watch, when we see her

ranging up alongside. Den de cappen order de guns to be fired; but before de matches lighted, de stranger she aboard us. In a few minutes forty savage-looking fellows came springing on to our deck, pistolling some and cutting down oders of de crew. I see at once what going to happen—if I stay on board de brig, I be killed wid de rest—so I make a leap and gain de fore-rigging ob de stranger. Running for’ard, I leap down de hatchway and stow myself away in a berth. Eben dere I hear de dreadful cries and shrieks ob de crew as dey put to death by de pirates—for such I guess be de gentry into hands whose we hab fallen. I know by de sounds I hear as I lie quaking in de berth dat dey were removing de cargo ob de prize on board dere own ship. It was nearly daylight before dey hab taken out all de cargo dey wish to secure; den dey cast off, and directly afterwards I hear several shot fired. I know dat sooner or later I must show myself, as de watch who hab been working all night would be coming below to turn in; so I creep on deck, and make my way aft to where a man I tink must be de cappen was standing. No one stop me, for dey all too busy or too sleepy to notice me. I take off my hat and make him a polite bow, and ask in English if he want a cabin-steward, as I ready to serve him. “And if you like sea-pie, cappen, I cook one such as nobody can beat, let me tell you dat,” I say. “I head cook.”

““You’re an impudent rascal, whoever you are,” he reply, ‘but perhaps, for once in a way, you speak the truth.’

““Do, cappen, just try me to-morrow, or next day, or when you get de materials to put in de pie,” I say.

““I’ll think about that, my man,” he answer, licking him lips. And den I know I all safe. ‘He not kill me if he tink I make good sea-pie,’ I say to myself; ‘for black fellow sometimes more cunning dan white buccra—he! he! he!’ Peter chuckled. ‘Where do you come from?’ he ask.

““I tell him I carried off and made to serve on board de French ship, and dat I glad to escape from her. Dis not quite true, but I guess it make him more ready to save my life.’

““Well,” he say, ‘I happen to want a steward, and if you prove to be what you say you are, and can cook as well as you boast that you can, I’ll take you into my service; but if not, it will be the worse for you.’

““He den ask sharply, “What do you take this ship for, boy?””

“Of course, sar, English man-o’-war,’ I answer—though I know berry well dat not true.

“You haven’t quite hit it, but you’ll be much better off than if she was,’ he say, tinkin me simple lad who no do any mischief. He den shout out to de crew on deck, and tell dem not to harm me. Just den, as I look ober de side, I catch a glimpse of de brig which we were leaving settlin down, and in anoder minute de water close ober de mast-heads. Den I tink I act berry wise in getting on board de pirate. De cappen den send me down into de cabin to look after de tings dere and put it in order, saying dat his oder steward been killed in an action a few days before. We were now, I found, steering to de nor’-west. Two or tree days after dis we take anoder prize, which was robbed ob eberyting ob value on board, and was den treated same as *Les deux Amis* had been. I was very glad to get off wid my life, but I berry much wish myself out of de ship again, and determined to make my ‘scape as soon as I hab opportunity.

“De cappen each day ask me when I going to make de sea-pie. I always say, “When I get de fowls, and de turkeys, and de ham, and de oder tings to put in it. But I make you some lobscouse in de mean time,” I say. And so I did; and he and de mates say dey nebber taste such good lobscouse in dere lives. “Ah! not equal to de sea-pie I make some day or oder,” I answer; for I know as long as I promise de sea-pie dey not kill me. I only hope in de mean time no man-o’-war get hold ob us; if she did, I should be hung up wid de rest, and de judges not believe I come on board ‘cause oderwise I drown, and stay only to make a sea-pie. We soon get near an island, which I guess was one ob de Bahamas from de way de ship was steered, now in one direction, now in anoder, between rocks and sandbanks. De cappen ask me if I know where we were. I say, “I suppose we somewhere on de Spanish Main.”

“All right,” he answer; “maybe you’re not much of a navigator?”

“Poor nigger like me know berry little ‘cept how to make sea-pie,’ I say. He den order me to go below, and soon afterwards I hear de roar ob de breakers, and I know we’d got near the shore. Den de ship sail on and I guess we’d got into a harbour; but she did not come to an anchor, but sail on and on. Den, looking up through the skylight, I see de boughs ob de green trees oberhead, and a high cliff which seem about to topple down on de deck ob de ship. Still we sail on and on, till at last I hear de anchor let go and de cable run out, and when I come on deck I find de ship in a wide lagoon wid several oder vessels and some large boats, and a village ob huts and sheds under de

trees on de shore. I now know dat I was in one ob de old buccaneer hiding-places, and I guess dat de vessels I see were dose de pirates had capture and carry off. When the sails were furled I go up to the cappen and ask if he wish me to go on shore to buy some poultry and vegetables and oder tings I might require for de sea-pie.

“No, no; you stay on board,” he answered. “I’ll send off for materials, and we shall then see what you can do.”

“I pretend to be well pleased, and tell him all de tings I want. Dat evening plenty of provisions came on board. Dere were—let me see—butter-birds and whistling ducks, snipe, red-tailed pigeons, turkeys, clucking hens, parrots, and plantation coots; dere was beef and pork and venison, and papaw fruit, squash, and plantains, calavansas, bananas, yams, Indian pepper, ginger, and all sorts ob oder tings. I pick out what I know make de best pie, putting in plenty of pepper—for dat, I guess, would suit de taste ob de genelman—and den I cover the whole ober wid thick crust. It take de night and the next day to bake, and when it am ready de cappen and his officers, and some friends from de shore, dey all say dat dey nebber eat any pie like it; and I laugh, and say, “I make better one anoder day.” Dey all eat till dey could eat no more, and den drink to wash it down till one and all am so drunk dat dey couldn’t lift up dere heads. When I see dis, I say to myself, “Now’s the best time for me to try and be off;” and I put a piece ob de pie into a basket, and a calabash of water, and going on deck I see a small canoe made fast to de side. I drop it under de stern, and den go back into the cabin. Ebery one ob dem am still fast asleep; so I lowered de basket into de canoe from one ob de after-ports, and slip down myself widout making any noise. Cutting de painter, I let de canoe drift away before the breeze, which blew down the lagoon. I hab watch during de day one or two boats coming in, so I know the entrance, and as soon as I get to a distance from de vessels I paddle away as fast as I could. I might hab a long distance to go before daylight, but as it was only just dark dere would be plenty ob time. I expected ebery moment to be oberhauled by de sentries on de shore, but no one was dere, or, at all events, dey not see me. On I go till I get under de cliffs which I see when de ship come in—den I know I in de right passage. Dere was a current, too, by which I judge dat de tide was ebbing. Next I find myself between low banks, for de whole country towards de sea am flat. At last I hear de waves breaking on de shore—not very loud, though; dat makes me hope dat de water smooth. I soon reach de entrance ob de creek, and safely pass de bar. I determine to paddle to de

southward; I hab water and provisions to last me for a week or more, and before dat time I hope to get aboard an English or French vessel—it matter berry little to me. When morning break I look out astern, but could see no boat or vessel, and I hope I not pursued; as I was well out ob sight ob land, even if I was, de pirates would hab a difficult job to find me. De sea remain smooth, or my canoe, which was only intended for de lagoon, would hab been swamped. When my pie nearly gone and what remain was scarcely eatable, I see a vessel standing to de westward. De wind was light, and by paddling hard I might reach her. I did paddle, for I no hab a drop ob water in my calabash, and if I miss her I might die ob thirst. On she come, and de breeze freshen. I was coming from de north—she was crossing my course; I shriek and shout—already she nearly pass me; I stand up in my canoe and wave my paddle—den again I sit down and pull away like mad. Again I stand up and shout wid all my might and wave my paddle. I praise God, dey see me; de vessel round to, and in a few minutes I alongside. De cappen ask me where I come from. I tell him I escape from some pirates who would hab cut my throat if I hadn't known how to make sea-pie, and dat I make one for him as soon as I get opportunity. He laugh, and say dat he believe my story, and dat he gib me a trial. He nebber do so, however, 'cause you capture his vessel before I get de necessary materials.—And now, Massa Tracy, you know my history.'

"From the account Peter gave me, I strongly suspected that the vessel which had captured him was the one which attacked the *Ouzel Galley*, and I wished that we might have an opportunity of looking for her. The captain was, Peter had told me, an Englishman, as were many of the people with him; but there were others of all nations, as well as mulattoes, Sambos, and blacks. The descendants of the buccaneers still inhabit many of the keys on the Bahama bank, and probably the white population living on shore were some of those people, who keep up the customs and habits of their ancestors. I must try and learn more from Peter on the subject, and ascertain exactly where he was picked up by the *Flora*. If so, calculating the distance he had come in the canoe, we might be able to discover the hiding-place of the pirates. We have been some time getting back to Port Royal, and as the *Narcissus* is just sailing for England, I must close this to send by her. We received some bad news on our arrival; the blacks are actually in rebellion and have committed all sorts of mischief, murdering the whites and all who oppose them in every direction. We're ordered off to the north coast. Mr Foley was very anxious to go there, but he is now in a great state of agitation lest any harm



should have befallen our friends; and well he may be—indeed, I can't help feeling very anxious myself. Still, I don't want you to be frightened, Norah, and I hope all will go well, and that we shall find when we get there that the blacks have not attacked Mr Twigg's house. With best love to father, and kind regards to Mrs Massey and Owen, if he has arrived, as I make no doubt he will have long ago—

"I remain—

"Your affectionate brother—

"Gerald Tracy."

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## Chapter Thirteen.

**Norah's and Captain Tracy's anxiety at non-arrival of the Ouzel Galley—Her owners give her up as lost—The underwriters refuse payment of insurance—The matter submitted to arbitration—Captain Tracy invited to Dublin—He is still convinced that the Ouzel Galley will appear—The arbitrators meet at a dinner to discuss the subject and agree to await events—Captain Tracy returns home—Reported loss of the Champion—Captain Tracy resolves to go in search of the Ouzel Galley and Champion—Norah gets leave to go with him—The Research purchased—Captain O'Brien goes to Bristol to obtain hands—A stranger brings a message from a dying shipmate—A message from O.M.—Ferris, Twigg, and Cash supply funds—Captain O'Brien returns, and sails on board the Research.**

Interesting as Gerald's letter was to Norah and her father, it caused them the greatest possible anxiety. Owen had sailed some considerable time before it was written, and he had not yet arrived! Poor Norah scarcely dared ask herself what had happened. Had the *Ouzel Galley* been overtaken by the hurricane? Gerald at the same time appeared certain that she had escaped it, and if she had, by what cause was she delayed? Had she been captured by the enemy? That was too probable; but, then, Owen would surely have found means of sending a letter to England describing the event. Captain Tracy

immediately wrote to the house in Dublin, but they had heard nothing of the ship.

"Oh, father!" exclaimed Norah at length, in a tone which showed her alarm, "can he have fallen into the hands of those terrible pirates of whom Gerald speaks?"

"The *Ouzel Galley* was too well manned, and, I may venture to say, would have been too well handled and fought, to yield to a rascally buccaneering craft," answered Captain Tracy. "No, no, Norah, don't let that thought trouble you; she may have been dismasted in a gale of wind—no skill can at all times prevent such an accident—or she may have met with long calms in the tropics and contrary winds afterwards. Wait a bit, cushla machree, and she'll come in some fine morning when we least expect her."

Still the old captain himself was sadly troubled about the matter. Norah could with difficulty keep up her spirits, though she tried to do so for her father's sake and for that of Mrs Massey, to whom she endeavoured not to communicate her own alarm; but the poor mother had begun to feel as anxious as she was, and every time Norah went to see her, her first utterance was, "No news of Owen yet?" Then she would sigh, and the tears would trickle down her pale cheeks. The captain paid daily visits to Waterford, carefully examining the public papers to ascertain if anything had been heard of the *Ouzel Galley*; but week after week and month after month went by, yet nothing was heard of her. Captain Tracy again wrote to Ferris, Twigg, and Cash; in their answer they said that, having waited so long a time without hearing of her, they considered her lost, and were about to apply to the underwriters to pay over the amount of her insurance. Captain Tracy, who, though holding the firm in great respect, was nevertheless always free and outspoken, replied that he did not consider the vessel as lost, and that she might even now some day appear. He had expressed himself in a similar manner to one of the underwriters, who was then at Waterford; and when the firm applied for payment, that gentleman declined acceding to their demand till they could produce evidence of the loss of the vessel. Ferris, Twigg, and Cash became indignant, and talked of instituting law proceedings. On this, Mr Thompson, one of the underwriters, entreated them to desist, and proposed that the matter should be placed in the hands of arbitrators. Mr Twigg and Mr Cash agreed accordingly to postpone proceedings till they could hear from their principal partner, Mr Ferris, who was still in Jamaica;

and finally consented, subject to his approval, to submit the matter to arbitration.

"Then let us forthwith proceed to select a dozen good men and true between us—you shall choose six and we'll choose six, and we'll bind ourselves to abide by the decision to which they may come," said Mr Thompson. As it was considered in Ireland, as well as across the Channel, that a good dinner enjoyed by sensible people produces good feeling and good fellowship, it was agreed by the contending parties that they should invite the twelve arbitrators and lay the matter of the supposed loss of the *Ouzel Galley* before them on that occasion. As Captain Tracy was rightly considered to be able to offer an enlightened opinion on the subject, he was requested to come up to Dublin to afford them all the information he possessed. Though he hated the land journey, and looked upon it as a more dangerous adventure than he would a voyage round the world, he could not refuse to comply with their request. He therefore arranged to leave Norah with Mrs Massey, to whom, though her own heart was well-nigh broken, she could afford comfort and sympathy during his absence. Packing up his valise, girding his sword to his side, and sticking a brace of pistols in his belt under his cloak, he set off by the stage, fully expecting to have to fight his way through half a score of highwaymen and footpads at the least. Still, thinking it possible that the *Ouzel Galley* might arrive, he sent a boat down the harbour the evening before his departure, which returned only just as he was about to start with the information that no *Ouzel Galley* was in sight.

Notwithstanding his expectation of being attacked by Rapparees or other robbers, he reached Dublin in safety, and was welcomed by Mr Twigg, who took him to his own house that they might discuss together the subject in hand.

"A sad affair this, the loss of our good ship. We expected to realise a fine percentage by her cargo, and now we not only lose that, but our friends refuse to pay the insurance," observed the merchant. "You surely, Captain Tracy, must be convinced that she went down in the hurricane, or has been captured and destroyed by the enemy."

"I am not at all convinced of either one or the other," answered Captain Tracy, bluntly. "She was, or, I may venture to say, she is, as stout-built a ship ever floated, and I hold to the opinion that she would not have foundered while any other craft could keep above water. I hear, indeed, that two or three vessels which were caught in that same hurricane, though severely

damaged, got at last safely into port. Mr Ferris wrote word, as you are aware, sir, that, after a thorough examination of the coast, no signs were discovered of her having been driven on shore, as all the vessels wrecked were identified and she was not among them. If she had been captured by the enemy, her master, Owen Massey, would have found means to communicate with us and let us know that he and his people were prisoners. By a letter from my son, I hear that there are still some picarooning villains infesting those seas, but they generally attack smaller fry than the *Ouzel Galley*. She was, as you are aware, well armed and well manned, and I can answer for it that Owen Massey would not have been taken by surprise, and would have beaten off in a fair fight any such craft, as he would any privateer of equal or, I may venture to say, of considerably superior force. His orders were to avoid fighting if he could do so with due regard to his safety—and I never knew him disobey orders from the time he first came to sea with me."

"Then, from what you say, Captain Tracy, your opinion is opposed to the interests of the firm," observed Mr Twigg, in a tone which showed that he was somewhat annoyed.

"I express the opinion I hold, sir, and you never found Gerald Tracy say or do anything contrary to the interests of his employers," answered the captain firmly. "What you want to obtain, sir, is a rightful decision; and my belief and hope is that, if the insurance money were paid to you, you would have to refund it."

"You only say what is true, captain, and you will pardon me for my remark," exclaimed the merchant, who was really an upright and generous-hearted man. "Nothing would give me greater satisfaction than to see the *Ouzel Galley* coming in under charge of her young master, with or without her cargo, however much thereby Ferris, Twigg, and Cash might be out of pocket. We'll now go and join our friends—and I beg you to believe that nothing you may say will alter the respect in which I hold you."

The matter on which the party had been assembled was soon discussed. Some were of opinion that the *Ouzel Galley* had been lost; others, that she had been captured; while several held with Captain Tracy that she was still afloat, perhaps dismasted or waterlogged, but that she would in time find her way home. One fact was certain, that she had not yet made her appearance, and that nothing had been heard of her since she was seen off Bellevue on the morning of the hurricane. The important point decided was that the two parties should on no account go to law, and that they should wait a further decision

till efforts had been made to discover the fate of the missing ship, should she not in the mean time return to port. Mr Ferris was informed that she had not yet arrived, and was requested to take all the steps he could devise for discovering what had become of her. Among others, he was to apply to the admiral to ascertain if any British cruisers had seen or heard of such a vessel in distress, while notice was to be sent on board every merchantman begging the master to make inquiries concerning her, or to afford any information he might already have obtained.

Captain Tracy, having concluded all the business he had to transact in Dublin, went back to Waterford. What a blessed thing is hope! Poor Norah and the widow were still supported by the expectation of the *Ouzel Galley's* return, even although every one else in Waterford believed that she was long since at the bottom of the ocean. Day after day and week after week went by, and still the *Ouzel Galley* did not appear. Norah's cheek was becoming thinner and paler, and the widow's heart sadder and sadder. It seemed hard indeed to lose her only child; but she trusted in God. She knew that He orders all for the best, and not once did she allow her heart to entertain rebellious thoughts against His love and mercy. Anxiously did the captain and Norah look out for letters from Jamaica; they hoped that Gerald would send them information. At all events, it would be a satisfaction to hear from him; but since his last long letter, none arrived. News was received from other sources of a fearful insurrection in the island, but Norah got no letters from Ellen, and hearing that numerous white people had fallen victims, she began seriously to fear that her friend might be among them. The captain wrote to Dublin, but the house there had not heard from Mr Ferris. At length another report came which added much to their anxiety, and if found to be true must plunge them into deep grief. It was to the effect that his Majesty's ship *Champion*, having sailed from Jamaica on a cruise, had not since been heard of.

"She'll turn up," exclaimed the captain, when he brought home the intelligence, which it would be useless to attempt concealing from Norah. The news appeared in print in the public papers, and an opinion was expressed that she had not been captured by the enemy, it being thought more likely that she had been capsized in a squall and gone down, or run during a dark night on one of the numerous reefs in the seas she was navigating and been dashed to pieces before any of her people could escape.

"I won't believe it, any more than I'll believe that the *Ouzel Galley* is lost," exclaimed the captain. "Don't give way, Norah. These newspapers tell lies; they're published for no other object. I shouldn't be surprised if we hear that the *Champion* has never been missing, and that the admiral has sent her on some particular service; probably the next packet from Jamaica will give us an account of her return to Port Royal."

Still poor Norah could not restrain her tears. "I don't believe that she's lost, Norah. Don't, now!" repeated her father. The captain, indeed, did his best to comfort her, but it was a hard matter for him; especially as he himself, notwithstanding his bold assertions, knew how likely it was that the sloop of war had really been lost. His honest heart was racked with grief as he thought that the days of his gallant young son had been cut short. Fresh despatches arrived from Jamaica, detailing the capture of several of the enemy's ships, the return to port of various British cruisers, and the arrival of merchantmen; but not a word was said about the *Champion*. Further despatches arrived, which appeared in the public prints. A short paragraph alone mentioned that all hope of her safety had been given up, while another spoke somewhat pityingly of the vain notion entertained by a former commander of a well-known Jamaica trader, the *Ouzel Galley*, that that vessel was still in existence. "Indeed," it continued, "go certain it is that she must be lost, that the masters and pilots of the vessels trading in those seas have ceased to make inquiries about her."

"I hold to my opinion, notwithstanding," exclaimed the captain; "if others refuse to help in looking for the good ship, I'll go myself. There's an old proverb that the man who wants a thing goes for it himself, and I'll not believe that either Owen or Gerald are lost till I've had a thorough hunt for them. I've cash enough of my own to fit out a stout vessel, and to arm and man her too. I intended it for you, Norah, and Gerald, but there'll be sufficient left for what you may want, my poor child, even if it comes to the worst; and you must stay at home and take care of Widow Massey—you've need to comfort each other."

"No, father, if you go I will go; and go I hope you will," said Norah. "Would that you had ten times as much fortune to fit out as many vessels to search round the shores of the whole Atlantic. And, father, you'll take me with you? I must go; I should die with anxiety were I to remain behind. In the voyage I took with you I learnt all about a sea life. I know the various dangers I may have to go through, but I don't fear them; I am

ready to endure whatever perils you may be exposed to, and I'll not flinch from them."

Thus Norah argued with her father.

"But Mrs Massey—what will she do without you?" he asked.

"She would not detain me. Am not I going to assist in the search for her son, as well as in that for Gerald?" answered Norah. "Were I Owen Massey's younger brother, she would not hesitate to send me; she will not do so now. She has too long lived a life of solitude to object to being left for a few short months, especially when she can hope that Owen may be found."

Norah had gained her point. The old captain was really thankful to have her society, and so often had he braved the dangers of the sea that he no longer feared them for his daughter. Firm as the captain was in his opinion, few others agreed with him; and when it was known that he was looking out for a ship, most of his acquaintance pitied him, and whispered that the loss of his son had turned his head. Still, nothing any one could say changed his resolution; indeed, there was something grand in his very obstinacy, and worthy of admiration. The only person who stuck to him was Captain O'Brien.

"If I were a younger man, faith, I'd be after going out as mate," exclaimed the brave old captain. "Whether the lads are alive or dead, the point will be settled, and I am fain to believe that they are still alive. If I can't go myself, I'll prove my faith in the undertaking by subscribing five hundred pounds towards it. The sooner you get the ship fitted out and put to sea, the better it will be for my friend Norah—of that I'm very sure."

Though the two old captains were thus of one mind, no one else agreed with them. The house of Ferris, Twigg, and Cash would have nothing to do with the matter; they were not inclined to send good money after bad, and unless they could gain some information, however slight, that the *Ouzel Galley* was really in existence, they should consider it folly to send another vessel to look for her. They would not even help in searching for a fitting vessel. Captain Tracy, however, heard of one which had been brought into Cork harbour as a prize, and, accompanied by his friend O'Brien, he went over to have a look at her. She was just the vessel they wanted; she was ship-rigged, carried twenty guns, and was quite new, having been only a few weeks out of port when she was captured. She was of great beam, and would carry four or six more guns, if necessary. The purchase was

soon completed; and the two captains, having engaged a few hands to navigate her, brought her round to Waterford, where she could be fitted out under their own eyes. One of the points to be settled was her name. Captain O'Brien, bowing to Norah, proposed that she should be called *Love's Messenger*; but to this Norah objected, and it was finally settled that she should be called the *Research*. The captain had devoted Gerald's prize-money, and the whole sum he had at his own disposal, and the amount contributed by Captain O'Brien; but still a sum was required for ammunition, stores, and the wages of the crew. Captain Tracy was in a dilemma; he might obtain a cargo for the vessel, but then he would have to wait for a convoy, as no insurance could otherwise be effected on her, and that would cause a delay. Rather than suffer this, he resolved to sell his patrimony, though very unwilling to do so. Captain O'Brien, who had formerly traded to Bristol, had gone over to that port to look out for efficient officers and any good men he could find to form part of the crew; the remainder could be obtained at Waterford.

Captain Tracy was setting off one morning, resolved to make the final arrangements with his lawyer for the disposal of his property, when just as he left his house he was accosted by a man, whose ragged dress, shoeless feet, and thin cheeks showed that he was suffering from the extreme of poverty. Captain Tracy's well-practised eye convinced him at once, before the man had spoken, that he was a sailor, and believing that he came to beg, he put his hand into his pocket to relieve his necessities, when the man, touching his battered hat, addressed him, "Plase, yer honour, are you Captain Tracy?"

"I am. What is it you want with me?" asked the captain.

"Shure, I'm glad to hear it, for I've been looking for yer honour for many a day," answered the man, "as I've made a vow, if you were still in the land of the living, to give you a message from a dying shipmate, and my mind couldn't rest aisy till I'd done it."

"What's the message, my friend? Is it a long or a short one?" asked the captain, eyeing the man steadily, to judge whether he was speaking with sincerity or uttering a falsehood. "What ship did you belong to, my friend?"

"The *Fair Rosamond*, yer honour, homeward-bound from Port Royal. We met with misfortunes from the time of sailing. We had Yellow Jack aboard us; then a course of foul wind, and when about a hundred leagues from the chops of the Channel,



we were dismasted in a heavy gale; and at last, after driving about for many a day till we ran short of water and provisions, we were cast on the coast of Connemara, and only I and three others got to shore—the captain and the rest of the hands who were left alive, for Heaven hadn't spared many of them, were washed away and drowned. I was like to have died too, but some country people took care of me, and I pulled through; and then, remembering my vow, I set off without a shiner in my pocket to give the message to yer honour."

"Come in, my friend," said the captain, by this time convinced that the man was speaking the truth, and becoming anxious to hear what he had got to say. The stranger looked at his ragged garments and hesitated when the captain invited him into the parlour, where Norah was seated, and bade him take a chair; however, plucking up courage, he did as he was desired. Captain Tracy having briefly told Norah what he had just heard, turned to the seaman.

"You have not yet given me your name," he said.

"It's Larry Cregan, yer honour. You may trust to what I say, for I wouldn't desave yer honour, that I wouldn't," answered the man.

"Well, Larry, let me hear all about this message," said the captain, "for you haven't given me a hint yet what it is."

"Well, thin, yer honour, it's nothing but the truth I'll spake," began Larry. "We had well-nigh half our crew pressed out of the *Fair Rosamond*, and had to make up our number with such hands as the captain could get without being over particular. Among them was a countryman of mine—Tim Reardon, he called himself. He looked mighty sickly when he came aboard, and we hadn't been many days at sea before he grew worse. He wasn't fit for work; but we were short-handed, and he had to stick to his duty. And says I to myself, 'Tim Reardon isn't long for this life, and so I'll do my best to help him;' and when he was aloft or whatever he had to do, I always kept near him, and helped him many a time when he hadn't strength to pull and haul by himself. This won his heart and made him wish, as he said, to do me a good turn; but that wasn't ever likely to be in his power. He grew worse and worse, and at last could no longer crawl upon deck. I used to sit by him when it was my watch below, and spake such words to comfort him as I could think of. One day, howsomdever, he says to me, 'Larry, I've got something on my conscience, and something else in my pocket which I want you to take charge of.'

“Anything to serve ye, Tim,” says I.

“I’ve been an outrageous wicked fellow all my life, and have done all sorts of bad things,” says Tim. ‘I’ve consorted with pirates, and have seen many a robbery and cruel murder committed—but I won’t talk of that now. I can’t do much good, I’m afraid, but what I can I wish to do, what I’d made up my mind some time ago, when I was well-nigh dying and should have slipped my cable if it hadn’t been for the care I received from a countryman, who took pity on me and nursed me as if I’d been his brother. As I got better he told me to cheer up, as he felt sure I should live. “Now, Tim,” says he, “if you ever get to Old Ireland, I want you to find out Captain Tracy, who lives near to Waterford, and tell him that I am alive, and, please Heaven, will one day get back to see him and his daughter. I can’t tell him whereabouts to look for me, for the best of reasons, that I don’t know where I am—nor have I any chance of making my escape; but you, Tim, may some day get free, and promise me, if you do, that you will take this message to Captain Tracy, and say that hope keeps me alive.”’

“But maybe Captain Tracy won’t believe me?” says I. ‘If he doesn’t, his daughter will; and to make sure, take this bit of paper and show it them,’ he replied. He wrote two letters on it; it was but a scrap, but it was the only piece he had. I put it in my ‘baccy-box to keep it safe. Not two days after that I managed to make my escape, and, getting back to Jamaica, looked out for a homeward-bound vessel. As luck would have it, I shipped aboard the *Fair Rosamond*; and now, as death is hauling away at the tow-line, and I have no chance of fulfilling my promise, if you wish to do me a service and keep my soul quiet, you’ll promise to take the message to Captain Tracy and the bit of paper in my ‘baccy-box; I’ll leave that to you, and everything else I’ve got on board.

“I promised Tim that I’d do as he wished, and that if I failed he might haunt me, if he’d a mind to do so, till my dying day. Tim has come more than once in my dhramas to remind me, and I’ve been aiger ever since to do his bidding.”

“And where’s the bit of paper?” asked Captain Tracy eagerly.

“Here it is, yer honour,” answered the seaman, pulling a battered old tobacco-box out of his pocket, from which he produced a yellow scrap of paper, on which was written, apparently with the end of a burnt stick, the letters O.M. Norah had been too much excited even to speak. She gazed at the paper.

"Yes—these letters were, I am sure, written by Owen. I knew that he was alive; I was certain of it!" she exclaimed, her bosom palpitating as she spoke with the varied emotions which agitated her. "Oh, father, look at them! They must have been written by Owen; he had no time or means for writing more, and he was sure we should recognise them if they were ever brought to us."

The captain took the paper and examined it. "Yes, I truly believe that these letters were inscribed by Owen Massey. Had he attempted to write more, he knew that the whole would probably be obliterated before it could reach us, so he did the wise and thoughtful thing," he said. "I praise Heaven that he is alive. I was sure from the first that the *Ouzel Galley* did not go down in the hurricane, and this proves it; though what has become of her, or where Owen is imprisoned, is more than I can make out—for imprisoned I take it that he is, and strictly guarded too, or he'd have long since found his way home."

"The more reason, then, that we should go in search for him," exclaimed Norah. "Oh, father, let us sail as soon as possible."

"Captain O'Brien will soon be back from Bristol, and nothing need longer delay us, except the want of funds," said the captain, "and they must first be raised. But with the assurance that Owen is still alive—and I think the account we have heard affords that—I believe that my friends Ferris, Twigg, and Cash will no longer hesitate to advance the required amount. For, though we have no evidence that the *Ouzel Galley* has escaped destruction, my belief is that she is safe, as well as her master, although we are at present almost as much in the dark as ever as to where she is. Had Tim Reardon survived, we should, I have no doubt, been able to obtain much valuable information to guide us; but as he is dead, we must trust to what we can hereafter gain. We'll hear, however, what further our friend the seaman can tell us. Perhaps, after he has had some food, he may remember more of what Tim said to him."

"I'm mighty hungry, yer honour—it's the truth," said Larry, looking up; on which Norah hastened to get some cold meat and bread, not forgetting a noggin of whisky, at which Larry's eyes glistened. The captain allowed him to eat in silence, and he proved how hungry he must have been by the quickness with which he devoured the viands placed before him. Another examination elicited little further information, however, from the seaman; his messmate had never mentioned the circumstances under which he had met the person who had given him the paper with the initials O.M. on it. He remembered only that he

had once spoken of a fine ship of which O.M. had been master, and which he had not long ago seen, although he either did not know her name or was bound not to divulge it. It was evident, indeed, that the unfortunate Tim Reardon was under some fearful oath which he was afraid to break, and that he had always spoken with the greatest caution, lest he might in any way commit himself.

"Many would call yours a cock-and-bull story," observed Captain Tracy, "but I believe you, Larry, and you may have the satisfaction of knowing that you have fulfilled your promise to your dying messmate. Though you ask for no reward, I'll do what I can to repay you for the information you have given me; and now you've had some rest and food, if you'll come in with me to Waterford, I'll give you a fresh rig out, and you can cast away the rags you've got on your back."

"Faith, yer honour, I'm in luck thin. I'm ready to walk a dozen miles or more," exclaimed Larry, jumping up; and, giving a bow with his battered hat and a scrape of the foot, he added, "The top of the morning to you, young lady, and a thousand thanks. It's put fresh life into my heart. Shure, I hope the gentleman you've been inquiring after will come back alive some bright day."

Followed by Larry, the captain hurried into Waterford, where, having got the seaman rigged out from top to toe in a new suit of clothing, he repaired to Ferris, Twigg, and Cash's office. He there wrote a letter to the firm in Dublin, giving an account of the information he had just received, and urging them to advance the sum required to enable the *Research* to proceed on her voyage. Soon after he had despatched the letter, Captain O'Brien arrived, bringing with him two mates and eight good men.

"And now, old friend," he said, "as I've neither wife nor daughter at home to pipe their eyes at the thoughts of my going, and old Molly, my housekeeper, however unhappy she may be at first, will soon be reconciled to my absence, I've made up my mind to offer myself as a passenger, to help look after Mistress Norah, in case anything should happen to you. Will you take me?"

"With all my heart," answered Captain Tracy. "I shall be glad of your society on my own account, and still more for Norah's sake; for, though I feel as strong and hearty as I did a dozen years ago, yet it may be Heaven's will to call me, and it would be a comfort to my heart to think that Norah was left with a

friend to protect her till Owen Massey should appear to claim her as his own."

"That matter is settled then, and I'll just have my traps packed up and give directions to old Molly to take care of the house till my return," said Captain O'Brien. "Having done that, I'll be quickly aboard to take charge till you appear, as I've already sent the mates and the men I brought over on board to keep them out of harm's way. I've also given notice that a few prime hands are wanted, and I hope to pick up two or three old shipmates in whom I can place perfect confidence."

As the two old captains left the office they met Larry Cregan, looking a very different being to what he had done a few hours before.

"Plase, yer honour," he said, touching his hat, "I've been told that a few hands are wanted for the *Research*, and though I'm not worth much at present, after I've put some good beef and pork on my bones I shall turn out as good a hand as any of them."

"I'll take you at your word, Larry," said Captain Tracy, "and you may go aboard as soon as you like."

"Shure, it's the safest place for me, yer honour," said Larry, "and maybe I'd otherwise be taking in too much of the potheen, just for joy with thinking that I'd delivered my message and was free of my oath."

Captain Tracy accordingly gave Larry an order to be received on board as one of the crew, while he himself returned homeward, to make further arrangements and to wait for a reply to the letter he had despatched to Ferris, Twigg, and Cash. He and Norah paid Mrs Massey a farewell visit. Norah had already carefully told her the information which had been so curiously gained.

"I cannot help you to search for my son," said the widow, "but, though unable to leave my home, I can pray unceasingly that Heaven will protect you in your mission, and reward you for your love and devotion."

Captain Tracy had expressed his earnest desire to sail without delay, and greatly to his satisfaction, much sooner than he expected, he received a letter, sent by a special messenger, from his friends, agreeing to his request and placing the required funds at his disposal. They also consented to ship a

certain amount of goods on board the *Research*, and no sooner was this known than several other merchants in Waterford agreed to add to her cargo. When it was known that Captain Tracy was going out in command of the *Research*, and that Captain O'Brien was to accompany him, as many good men as were required offered to ship on board her, and her crew was thus speedily completed. Great interest was excited when the object of the voyage became generally known, and multitudes collected on the quays, cheering right heartily as, her warps being cast off, sail was made and the *Research* glided away down the river. The two captains agreed that no ship they had ever commanded was better found, better armed, or better manned than she was. A fine northerly breeze earned her out of the harbour, and, all sail being made, she took her departure from the land, and steered a course for the West Indies.

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## **Chapter Fourteen.**

**The scenery of Jamaica—Proceedings at Bellevue—A description of the slaves on the estate—An expedition proposed—Arrival of Major Malcolm and Lieutenant Belt—A morning ride—A picnic—Visit to a remarkable cavern—Curious objects within—The guide's terror at seeing shadows in the distance—Archie's narrow escape—Warnings—Return homewards—Meet Martin bringing alarming intelligence.**

Among the numberless lovely islands which dot the ocean, few surpass Jamaica in beauty and magnificence of scenery, or are adorned with a richer vegetation. Grand as are the views the island presents to the voyager who approaches it on the southern shore, they are fully equalled by those of its northern coast. At a short distance from the beach the island rises into hills of gentle ascent, generally separated from each other by wide valleys, amid which numerous streams find their way to the ocean. The hills, mostly rounded, are covered with groves of beautiful trees, many of them loaded with rich fruits and flowers scented with the most delicious odours. Here is seen the pimento, remarkable for its beauty and fragrance, the dark green of its foliage finely contrasting with the bright tints of the grass beneath; while in every direction are fruit trees of various hues, the orange, pineapple, or tamarind, many bearing at the same time blossoms, unripe fruit, and others fit for plucking. In the lower grounds are fertile and level savannahs, plains waving with cane-fields, displaying a luxuriance of vegetation, the

verdure of spring blended with the mellow exuberance of autumn. In the distance, running down the centre of the island, rise the Blue Mountains, their tops dimly seen through the fleecy clouds, the greater portion of the range being covered with impenetrable forests, their sides often broken into inaccessible cliffs and abrupt precipices. These forests and cliffs have afforded for several centuries an asylum and fortress to fugitive blacks, who have there set pursuit at defiance, the game and wild fruits the woods supply enabling them to find subsistence without the necessity of descending into the lower regions to obtain food. Rocks and mountains, woodlands and plains, everywhere beautifully blending, form conspicuous features in the landscape of Jamaica. Dotted over the country are the pens, or farms, of the planters—their residences extensive, though not often more than one story in height, with gardens surrounding them, the works, boiling-houses, and other buildings generally concealed from view by thick woods; while beyond are the cane-fields and the dark, low huts of the negroes, standing together in the form of a village, far more picturesque at a distance than when closely approached. But the woods are the pride and beauty of the country; there the palm, the cocoa-nut, the mountain cabbage, and the plantain are often associated with the tamarind and orange, the oleander and African rose growing in rich luxuriance, the scarlet cordium of a glowing red, the jasmine and grenadilla vine forming verdant bowers, the lilac with tufted plumes, the portlandia with white and silky leaves, together with an infinite variety of flower and fruit bearing shrubs.

Such was the scenery surrounding Bellevue House, at which Ellen Ferris and her father had now spent some weeks with the worthy attorney, Mr Twigg, and his wife and family. Although there were rumours that the blacks in distant districts were disaffected, it was difficult to trace whence the reports originated, and it was generally believed that they were without foundation. The Jumby dance which Archie Sandys had witnessed some time before was considered a suspicious circumstance by Mr Ferris; but the overseer assured him that the blacks on the estate were all peaceably disposed, and that the assembly at the hut under the cotton-tree was merely for the performance of some rite of their barbarous religion, and should not cause the slightest uneasiness.

"I will keep an eye on what goes forward, and if I hear of any more meetings of the sort, I will take good care to learn their object," said the overseer. "You must let the blacks amuse

themselves in their own way, provided it does not interfere with work."

To Ellen, the blacks appeared happy and contented. She had no opportunity, indeed, of looking very deeply into the state of the matter. If the lash was used, she did not hear the cries of the victims, nor see the marks on their backs. She heard that if they were sick they were taken care of in an hospital, or rather in some huts appropriated to that object, and that they were attended by the medical man who had charge of that and two or three neighbouring estates. He occasionally visited at the house, and appeared to be a good-natured, merry individual, who told amusing stories about the negroes and their wonderful ignorance. The negroes of whom she saw most were the domestic slaves, who seemed attached to their masters, and were always willing and obedient, and, being well fed, looked sleek and contented. The most interesting was Martha, the black nurse of Mrs Twigg's children. Her devoted affection for her charges was remarkable; she seemed to have no care or thought for anything besides them, and though she occasionally joined in the village festivities among her own people, she invariably came back full of anxiety lest any harm should have happened to them during her absence. She was treated by her mistress with great kindness and consideration, and perfect confidence was placed in her. The old grey-headed butler, Martin, was also on a more familiar footing with his master than any white servant of the same position in an English household would have been; while all the other domestic slaves, or boys as they were generally called, were merry fellows, always laughing and joking, though holding old Martin in great respect—their garments consisting of a checked shirt, white trousers, and white jacket, though their feet were shoeless, and they generally dispensed with hats. They looked neat and clean, and had no reason to complain of want of physical comfort. Probably, in other cases where the master was ill-tempered, they would have been liable to punishment, deserved or undeserved.

"But what about the agricultural labourers?" asked Ellen Sandys, who was ever, when he could be so with propriety, by her side—she looking upon him as a well-mannered, intelligent schoolboy; so that Lieutenant Foley would have experienced no jealous feelings had he seen them together.

"Well, they, I suppose, are in their way as happy and contented as they need be," answered Archie. "The field slaves, as we call them, who live out in the huts there, are divided into gangs.



The first is composed of the stronger men and women, who work together, the women being able to do almost as much as the men. Their business is to clear the land, dig and plant the cane-fields, and in crop-time cut the canes and attend to the mill-house, where the canes are crushed and the sugar and molasses manufactured. The second gang is composed chiefly of the bigger boys and girls and more weakly women, who are unable to do the harder work, and the older men who have lost their strength. They have to weed the canes and attend to other lighter duties. The third gang consists of the young children, who are employed chiefly in weeding the gardens, collecting fodder or food for the pigs, and similar easy tasks. The men drivers are employed in looking after the first two gangs, and are allowed to carry whips to hold over them in terror, even if not often used. The gang of children is confided to the charge of an old woman, who carries a long switch; and with her it is no mere emblem of authority, for she employs it pretty frequently on the backs of the urchins. You have seen Mammy Quasheba, and I dare say she appears to you to be a very amiable old dame, for she takes care only to tickle her little charges when you or Mrs Twigg are in sight."

"But do the drivers often make use of those dreadful whips?" asked Ellen.

"On our estate they certainly do not; but on others, seldom or never visited by the proprietors, the only notion they have of maintaining order is the lash," answered Archie. "The unfortunate black is unmercifully flogged for the slightest offence, or for apparent idleness. You ask how many hours they work. Generally before daybreak they are aroused by the head driver, who comes into the village blowing a horn, and if they fail to turn out immediately, they become intimately acquainted with his whip. They work for three hours, and are then allowed half an hour for breakfast, during which they manage to stow away an enormous quantity of vegetable food. They then labour on till noon, when they have two whole hours, either to take their dinner, to sleep, or to work in their own provision grounds and attend to their pigs and poultry. From two till dark they resume their labours, when they generally knock off and return home, except in crop-time, when it is important to get the canes cut and carried as rapidly as possible, and the boiling-house requires a number of hands. However, they become fat and sleek during that period, as they may suck as much of the cane as they like, and do not look upon the task as especially laborious. As a number of artisans are required on the estate, such as carpenters, blacksmiths, masons, and coopers, the

more intelligent lads are selected and sent as apprentices to learn those trades; though they get pretty hardly treated at times, they afterwards possess considerable advantages over the untrained blacks, and often contrive to save enough money to buy their freedom. Altogether, I don't think the negroes of Jamaica can be said to be much worse off than the peasantry in many parts of the old country; they may in some respects be even better off than the Irish peasantry."

"But yet the poorest Irishman would not readily change places with them," remarked Ellen, "and I am afraid, from what I hear, that they are totally neglected as to their religious and moral condition."

"As to that, their mental powers are too low to receive religious instruction, and their habits too confirmed to be improved; and so, provided they can be maintained in health and perform the required amount of labour, few proprietors or overseers trouble themselves much about anything else," answered Archie. "Some, however, have tried to improve them, and have supported ministers and missionaries among them; but I don't know with what success."

"Oh, I wish that something could be done for the blacks on this estate!" said Ellen. "It is dreadful to think that they should be allowed by their so-called Christian masters to remain on in their heathen darkness."

"It is very kind in you to interest yourself in the poor blacks, and I am afraid not many white people trouble their heads about them," said Archie. "But I came, Miss Ferris, to propose an excursion to an interesting place in this neighbourhood which you should see before you go away—and I fear that your stay is not likely to be prolonged;" and Archie looked unutterable things, and heaved a sigh which Ellen did not observe.

"What are its peculiarities, and where is it?" she asked. "I should certainly like to visit any place worth seeing."

"It is a wonderful cave, about twelve or fifteen miles to the eastward of this," answered Archie. "I have never been there myself, as I have not had a whole holiday to enable me to make the trip, nor companions with whom I could enjoy it; but if you could persuade Mr Ferris and Mr and Mrs Twigg to go, I am sure they will be repaid for the fatigue of the journey. By starting early in the morning we can return by nightfall, as there is a carriage road all the way, or what is called one in Jamaica; but perhaps you are a horsewoman, and if so, the whole distance

might be performed before the sun has attained an overpowering heat."

Ellen was delighted; her only regret was that, the *Champion* not having appeared, Lieutenant Foley could not be of the party. Mr Ferris, when she told him of the proposal, expressed his readiness to go; and Mr and Mrs Twigg, though they had lived so long in the island, never having seen the cavern, were also willing to join the expedition.

"We must let the Pembertons know," said Mrs Twigg. "The other day Fanny Pemberton told me that she was especially wishing to visit the cave. She and her brother are sure to come."

"Pray ask them," exclaimed Ellen. "She is a dear, nice girl; and if she is fond of riding, she will be ready to accompany me."

"The sooner, then, we start the better," said Mr Ferris, "or business of some sort may prevent us, and we must not prolong our stay here."

"Then I propose we start to-morrow morning," said Mr Twigg. "There's nothing like fixing an early day, as an ardent lover would say, and we couldn't well choose an earlier. We'll order the buggies and horses to be at the door on the first sound of the slave-driver's horn, so that we may enjoy the full freshness of the morning."

Mrs Twigg forthwith despatched a messenger with a note to Walton Hall, Mr Pemberton's estate, which was situated about four miles inland from Bellevue, asking Miss Pemberton and her brother to come over at once, that they might be ready to start at daybreak.

The proposed expedition formed the subject of conversation for the rest of the evening, Archie Sandys being especially pleased that his suggestion had been so readily adopted. He and two other young book-keepers were to form members of the party. The family had collected for an early supper, when horses' hoofs were heard approaching the house; and it being announced that several gentlemen were coming, Mr Twigg, followed by half a dozen blacks, hurried out to meet them. He speedily returned, accompanied by two strangers in military uniforms, whom he introduced as Major Malcolm and Lieutenant Belt. The officers bowed to the ladies and shook hands with the gentlemen, and at once felt themselves at home.

"Supper will be ready in about ten minutes; in the mean time, will you go to your rooms and make yourselves comfortable after your ride," said Mr Twigg.

"What, did you expect us?" exclaimed the major.

"We always expect guests," answered Mr Twigg, laughing—"at all events, we are always ready for them. Let me show you the way, gentlemen; your valises are already there."

On their return, Major Malcolm, a fine, soldierly looking man who had apparently seen much service, explained that he and Lieutenant Belt were on their way to Montego Bay, having to inspect several small fortresses along the coast. "We pushed on, however," he continued, "rather faster than was prudent, and knocked up our horses so that they require a day's rest before proceeding further; and we must therefore impose ourselves on you as guests, unless you turn us out."

"My dear sir, you and your men and horses are perfectly welcome to remain as long as you please," answered Mr Twigg; "and so you would be if you'd brought your whole regiment, though we might, in that case, have found some difficulty in housing you."

Of course Major Malcolm and the lieutenant heard of the proposed expedition. Mr Ferris suggested that it could be put off, but the major begged that that should on no account be done, and that if steeds could be found for him and Lieutenant Belt, they might accompany the party.

"With great pleasure, my dear sir; we can mount you without difficulty," said Mr Twigg; and turning round, he gave the order to old Martin, who was standing behind his chair. Supper was still proceeding when Miss Pemberton and her brother Jack arrived and were heartily welcomed. She was a Creole, but with far more life and animation than the generality of her fair countrywomen; still, her cheek, pure as alabaster, was colourless; but her figure was good, and her features remarkably handsome. Altogether, she fully merited the encomiums Ellen had passed on her. She had been sent to school in England, and was thoroughly well educated and accomplished. Her brother Jack had had the same advantage, though he spoke, unless when excited, with the usual Creole drawl. From the few remarks he made—for he was not much addicted to talking—he was, however, not destitute of spirit; and, among his other good qualities, he evidently looked upon

his lovely sister with the most devoted admiration. The two young people promised to be a pleasant addition to the party.

The family retired earlier than usual, that they might be ready to start at the hour fixed on. The gallant major and the young subaltern were escorted to their room by Mr Twigg.

"I little expected to find two such beauties in this out-of-the-way spot," observed the major, as he was throwing off his uniform.

"Nor did I," exclaimed the lieutenant. "It is difficult to decide which of the two is the most charming, but I am most inclined to lose my heart to the young lady with the roses in her cheeks. She hasn't been long in this burning clime, I suspect, or they would have faded ere this."

"We shall not be rivals, then," observed the major, standing up in his shirt and trousers, and striking out with his doubled fists, as was his wont before turning in. "I prefer the last arrival, with the classical features and cheeks as pure as the lily—a fit model for Juno. If I were to be long in her society, I should fall desperately in love with her; but I am not likely to commit such a folly, and take care that you don't, Belt. We shall know more about them to-morrow, and perchance we shall discover that their charms are not so overpowering as we fancy. I have often found it to be the case on a second interview."

"I expect to be more enthralled than ever," remarked the lieutenant. "However, I have seldom found it difficult to break my fetters; so, major, you needn't trouble yourself on my account."

"We shall see by to-morrow evening," said the major. After a few more remarks in a similar strain, the two officers, both old campaigners, threw themselves on their beds, and were soon fast asleep.

They were aroused by a black servant, who, bringing in some large ewers of cold water, lighted their lamps and announced that the horses would soon be at the door. On descending to the hall they found the two young ladies in their riding-habits, whip in hand, ready to mount. Mrs Twigg and her husband and the other gentlemen soon made their appearance, and the servants brought round trays with cups of hot chocolate and bottles of liqueur.

"You must fortify yourselves, gentlemen," said Mr Twigg. "Let me recommend this curaçoa; it is a good preventive against any ill effects from the morning air."

While the major was engaged in sipping his chocolate, the young ladies had gone out, and the two officers, greatly to their vexation, found that Archie Sandys had performed the office they had expected to have undertaken, and had assisted Ellen and Fanny to mount. The horses provided for the officers were next brought forward.

"Here is your horse, major," said Mr Twigg, pointing to a fine-looking animal; "and, Lieutenant Belt, I hope you will not find yours inferior."

The two officers mounted, and had every reason to be satisfied with their steeds. Archie Sandys assumed the leadership of the party, and as they moved forward he managed to place himself by the side of Ellen. The carriages started almost immediately afterwards. Major Malcolm very quickly found an opportunity of riding up to Miss Pemberton, a position he seemed in no way disposed to abdicate. The young lieutenant in vain attempted to gain an equally favourable place by the side of Ellen, for Archie kept his post pertinaciously, determined not to be out-manoeuvred, and the road was not of a width to allow of three abreast. The rest of the gentlemen followed, talking and joking merrily.

The road led between hedges of prickly-pear, eight or ten feet in height, and often of considerable width, the broad leaves so closely overlapping each other that they formed a dense mass through which the light failed to penetrate, bright scarlet flowers and purple fruit ornamenting the massive wall. Here and there cocoa-nut trees sprang up from the inner side like oaks or elms in an English hedgerow, most of them loaded with fruit; while occasionally a cabbage palm or the palmetto royal towered above them, surpassing its neighbours in graceful beauty, its straight trunk rising without a branch to the height of a hundred feet or more, crowned by a waving plume, in the centre of which appeared a tender green shoot. Through the openings to the right appeared plantations of sugar-cane, and occasionally fields of Indian corn—the magnificent yellow cobs, with long, wavy beards, hanging from their vigorous stalks.

"Did you taste the cabbage palm the other day at dinner?" asked Archie.

"Yes, I thought it very nice," answered the young lady, rather surprised at the question.

"Do you know where it came from?" asked Archie.

"From a cabbage garden, I suppose," answered Ellen, laughing.

"No, from the top of one of those lofty trees," answered Archie. "That is to say, it was at the top, but to obtain it the tree had to be cut down."

"What a cruel sacrifice! I should not have eaten it with any satisfaction had I known that," exclaimed Ellen.

"We soon get indifferent to such matters in this country," said Archie. "See how many of them there are in all directions."

"I am afraid that you will become indifferent in other matters," observed Ellen—"to those slave-whips, for instance, though you say they are only used in cases of necessity. When the drivers are judges as to whether that necessity is lawful, the poor slaves are likely to feel the lash very frequently, I suspect."

"It is found from experience that they cannot otherwise be kept in order," answered Archie. "I confess that at first I shuddered as I saw the whip used."

"Do the blacks never rebel against such treatment?" asked Ellen.

"They have at times," replied Archie. "In the year '37 there was an outbreak, and there have been others at different periods; but they were put down in so rigorous a fashion that the negroes are not likely again, I fancy, to make the attempt."

"I trust not," said Ellen, "for it would be a fearful thing were these tens of thousands of blacks, discovering their strength, to rise on their masters and attempt to revenge the wrongs they have suffered."

The conversation between Ellen and her devoted attendant was, it must be confessed, of a very unsentimental character; indeed, she would very quickly have put a stop to anything that had been otherwise, although the romantic scenery through which they were passing might, under other circumstances, have exercised its influence over her. Not a breath of wind as yet disturbed the calm, pure atmosphere; the ocean appeared like a sheet of glass; the blue sky overhead was undimmed by a

cloud; the mountain-tops seen to the right rose above the mass of green, their outline distinctly marked, though at a considerable distance. The only sounds which reached them were the lowing of cattle and the signal horns of the drivers summoning the negroes to their work. In a short time the light increased, the sun rose above the ocean, and a gentle breeze waved the topmost boughs of the trees, breaking the sea below on the left into tiny wavelets. Now the road led round a hill, with a steep precipice on the left reaching down to the water, and high cliffs to the right covered with shrubs and creepers of every hue. As it was seen ahead, it appeared as if there was barely room for more than one horse to pass, and that no carriage could possibly get along without risk of falling over the precipice; but as they proceeded it widened out, and Archie, notwithstanding Ellen's cautions, insisted on still keeping his place, riding between her and the edge of the precipice.

"Pray keep behind me, or ride on in front, Mr Sandys," she exclaimed. "You would horrify me exceedingly were you to fall over the edge; and to save you from running the risk, I am compelled, you see, to ride so close to the cliff that I run the chance of having my hat torn off by the boughs above, or getting my shoulder struck by a projecting rock."

Still Archie begged to ride on as he was doing. "Were your horse to shy, Miss Ferris," he remarked, "I might be the means of saving you, and I would run every risk for the sake of doing that."

Ellen laughed. "I am very ungrateful," she said, "but I cannot allow you to be placed in any danger on my account: you make me feel uncomfortable, if not nervous, and I am almost inclined to be angry with you for your disobedience."

Archie at length rode on, though very unwillingly, and the hill being passed the road now struck more inland, sometimes leading over slight elevations, and at others along the levels for some distance, when the steeds, trained to a Spanish amble suitable for a tropical climate, got quickly over the ground. The groves of tall trees threw a shade across the road which prevented the heat from being overpowering. Before the sun had attained its full strength a rocky hill rose before them with a wood at its base; here they found a tent already pitched, and a fire at a little distance from it. A number of black servants, who, it appeared, had been sent on before, were busily engaged in cooking breakfast.



"De tent for de missee," said a black, Quambo by name, who acted as under-butler to old Martin, coming forward. "Dey rest dere till de carriages come if dey like."

The gentlemen threw themselves from their horses, eager to assist Ellen and Miss Pemberton to dismount, the lieutenant rushing forward and offering his hand to the former, who accepted it with a smile which sent a pang of jealousy through poor Archie's breast, the gallant major helping Fanny from her horse. While the young ladies took advantage of the tent to rest—for the ride had been much longer than they had been accustomed to take, and they felt somewhat tired—the gentlemen, lighting their cigars, strolled through the thick wood towards the entrance of the cavern. On their way they passed a large lagoon of stagnant water, surrounded by trees, every branch and leaf reflected on its mirror-like surface with a peculiar clearness. They could discover only two holes, which looked like the upper parts of arched doorways. Between them, in the face of the rock, was a niche in which a statue might have been placed, while just below it was a basin or hollow in the rock, which appeared to have been formed by art for the purpose of holding water.

"I shouldn't be surprised if the Spaniards had made a sort of chapel here when they had possession of the country," observed Lieutenant Belt. "See, that niche looks as if a figure of the Virgin Mary, for instance, had been placed there. This basin was evidently made to hold what they call holy water. They had probably made an attempt to convert the Indians by introducing their worship, but finding them obdurate and unable to comprehend its mysteries, put them to death as a punishment. From an account I read the other day, the island, when first discovered by Columbus, was thickly populated; but in the course of a few years, after the Spaniards took possession, the greater number of the natives had been murdered or expended in some other way."

The rest of the party agreed with him. As they were all getting hungry, they returned to the camp, where, in a space which had been cleared by the servants, a tablecloth had been spread, and was already covered with viands, cushions and mats being placed around on which the ladies could recline. The carriage party soon arrived, and Mr Twigg, in his cheery voice, summoned his guests to breakfast, which consisted of numberless West Indian delicacies. In spite of the good appetites their ride had given them, most of the party were too eager to explore the cavern to pay them that attention they

undoubtedly deserved. After the gentlemen had smoked their cigars, and the ladies had put on costumes more suitable for the object in view than their riding-habits, headed by Mr Twigg the party set forth, Major Malcolm escorting Miss Pemberton, and Ellen being attended by Archie and Lieutenant Belt, who was determined no longer to be cut out. Mr Ferris had taken charge of Mrs Twigg, who confessed that had not the girls required her as a chaperone, she would rather have remained at home.

"Martha, indeed, particularly wanted me not to come," she remarked. "She seemed unusually put out about something or other. Whether she fancied that the children were not as well as usual, or for some other cause, I could not guess; but they appeared to me to be so perfectly happy that I did not think it necessary to listen to her. She urged, however, that we should come back before dark, and Mr Twigg agreed that it would be important to get by the cliffs before sunset; after that, the ride is so easy, and we know it so well that there can be no danger."

This was said as they were proceeding through the wood. Mr Ferris agreed that it would certainly be advisable not to delay their departure after they had explored the cavern and taken luncheon, and that it would be better to endure the heat of the afternoon than to run the risk of travelling in the dark. An experienced guide and a supply of torches, consisting of bundles of candlewood split into small strips, had been provided. The party stood before the face of the rock.

"What, are we to go in there?" asked Miss Pemberton, in a tone of dismay.

"I am afraid that we shall discover no other mode of ingress," said Mr Twigg, as the guide, with the torches under his arm, crept through the larger of the two openings. "Come, Archie, do you and the rest of you go next," he said, turning to the two book-keepers, "and hail when the torches are lighted. You will assist to sweep the passage."

Archie, not very well pleased, obeyed his superior, and in a short time the voices of the young gentlemen from within were heard shouting, "All right!" The gallant lieutenant next went down on his hands and knees, his long legs disappearing through the entrance. The major stood bowing to Mrs Twigg, who seemed to consider that it was her duty to go next, that she might be ready to receive her charges; they, laughing, quickly followed her, the major and the other gentlemen bringing up the rear. They found themselves in a circular vestibule about twenty feet in diameter and fourteen in height,

with an irregular concave ceiling covered, as were the sides, with innumerable glittering stalactites, reflecting on their polished surfaces the light of the torches held by the guide and the young book-keepers, who stood round in a circle, flourishing them over their heads. Several columns of stalactite forming arches overhead gave the cavern, the appearance of a Gothic chapel, while between the pillars various openings led into avenues which diverged in different directions, apparently running far away into the interior of the mountain.

"See, there sits the presiding genius of the cavern," said Mr Twigg, taking a torch and advancing a few steps towards an object which had a wonderful resemblance to a statue carved by the sculptor's hand. It was that of a venerable hermit, sitting in profound meditation, wrapped in a flowing robe, his arms folded and his beard descending to his waist. His head was bald, his forehead wrinkled with age, while his features were well defined, the eyes, nose, and mouth being perfect. The graceful, easy folds of the drapery and the wavy flow of his beard were especially remarkable. Mr Twigg did not say that he had gone in shortly before with the guide and artistically touched up the features by the liberal use of charcoal.

"Shouldn't wonder if the old fellow was a god of the original inhabitants of the island," said Lieutenant Belt. "Never saw anything so natural in my life."

Expressions of delighted surprise escaped from the young ladies, and even Mrs Twigg was very glad that she had come.

"But we have only seen the commencement of this magic cavern; it has more wonders to reveal to us," remarked her husband, desiring the black guide to lead on. He accordingly proceeded through one of the widest passages in front of them, holding his torch high above his head to show its height, which appeared to be from twelve to fifteen feet. Each of the young men also carried a torch, which illumined the otherwise total darkness of the cavern, bringing out the numberless objects hanging from the roof or appearing on either side—canopies studded with bright gems, festoons of sparkling icicles, rostrums and thrones, busts of warriors and poets. Here were skulls grinning from the wall; columns of every order of architecture; fonts and basins, some holding water; and a thousand other representations of works of art. Here and there other passages struck off to the right or left, adorned in the same curious fashion. Most of the arches and columns appeared to consist of a greyish marble, and were wild and curious in the extreme. Some of the pillars were perfect, sustaining apparently the

massive superstructure; others were only half formed; and many were but just commenced by the dripping of water from above. Several of the apartments were cellular; others spacious and airy, having eyelet holes through the roof, which allowed the escape of noxious vapours, and assisted greatly to ventilate the cavern. The ground beneath their feet was of a soft nature, deep and yielding, and had a peculiar smell. As they advanced, thousands of bats flew out from among the crevices of the rock, disturbed by the light of the torches and the voices of the visitors, which echoed through the passages and vaulted roof. They had not gone far when the guide stopped short, and an exclamation of alarm escaped him.

"What is dem? Did you see dem, massa?" he asked of Archie, who was by his side. The rest of the party, who were close at his heels, saw numerous dark forms flitting by at the further end of a passage directly in front of them, while unearthly sounding voices reached their ears.

"Those must be shadows cast by the light of our torches," observed the major; "the sounds are merely echoes."

"No, no, massa, dey duppies," cried the guide; "de echo nebber take so long to come back to us."

Still the major was not convinced, although Mr Twigg suspected that they had disturbed an assembly of negroes, who, not expecting that the cavern was about to be visited by strangers, had met there for some purpose or other. It was some time before the guide recovered his courage.

"Come along," said Archie; "if they were duppies they will be afraid of interfering with white people, and if black fellows, they are still less likely to trouble us."

The other young men, who were always ready to follow Archie, insisted on the guide going on; but he let them proceed in advance, directing them which way to take. They had gone some distance further, passing the entrances of several more passages, when the guide cried out, "Stop, atop, massa; we got funder dan I tink." Scarcely were the words out of his mouth than Archie and his torch disappeared, and before they could stop themselves, two of his companions fell over. The ladies shrieked, supposing that the young men had fallen down some frightful hollow; but the shouts of laughter which followed soon reassured them, as did the assertions of the guide, that there was no harm done. It was found that they had merely gone down a descent of four or five feet, and had quickly again picked

themselves up. The guide followed them, and the ladies, assisted by the gentlemen, easily leaped down to a lower level of the cavern. They continued their walk without further interruption, till daylight streamed down upon them from above, and they found themselves in an open area, with steep rocks covered with trees surrounding them on all sides. This area, as nearly as they could conjecture, lay about a quarter of a mile from the entrance of the grotto. From it numerous other passages branched off, into one of which the guide led them. They shortly came to a magnificent circular chamber with a vaulted ceiling eighteen feet or more in height. The most curious feature was the straight taproot of a tree which descended from above, about the size of a cable, uniform in shape from the top to the bottom. It had apparently made its way through a cleft in the rock, and penetrated downwards till it reached the floor of the apartment. On one side was an opening into a narrow passage, which the guide endeavoured to dissuade the gentlemen from entering. Archie, however, who had become excited, and considered himself the leader of the party, insisted on going forward.

"Don't go, massa, don't go; you'll fall down deep well and nebber come up again," shrieked the guide. Archie and his companions, notwithstanding this warning, pushed forward, holding their torches well before them. The passage became more and more contracted, till they reached an upright ledge of rock rising like a parapet wall almost breast high. They climbed up it, but on the other side it sloped rapidly down, and Archie, bold as he had become, thought it prudent to draw back; but instead of doing so he found himself slipping forward, and would have been unable to stop had not one of the other book-keepers caught hold of his coat and assisted him to scramble up again. Just then the guide came up. "Massa, you not know what you escape," he exclaimed. "See." And he threw a stone, which, after descending for some seconds of time, was heard to plunge into water, the noise echoing backwards and forwards amid the rocks which formed the side of the chasm. Archie shuddered as he thought of his merciful escape. Other stones of larger size being thrown in produced a loud, hoarse sound which reached to a considerable distance.

"What a fearful uproar you would have made, Archie, if you'd taken a leap into the chasm!" said one of his companions.

"Don't talk of it, man; it is a lesson to me for the future to look before I leap," was the answer.

"No, massa, as I say, you nebber come up again, unless you pop up in de sea," observed the guide. "Dat hole full ob salt water and full ob big fish; but I nebber gone down, and nebber intend to go—he, he, he!"

Further exploration in that direction having been cut short, the party turned back, slowly to retrace their steps, occasionally entering for a short distance some of the numerous avenues which they discovered as they proceeded; but they were all apparently much like those they had already visited. The ceilings were incrustated with stalactites, between which in several places the fibrous roots of trees and plants forced their way downwards through the interstices; in many places honeycombed rocks formed the roof-work of the grotto; and in others, where openings appeared towards the sky, the ground was strewn with various seeds and roots, that of the bread-nut especially being in great abundance. Reptiles, too, of curious shape were seen scuttling away, disturbed by the intruders—toad, snake, and lizard forms, all curiously covered with incrustations. The parts of the cavern open to the air were delightfully cool, and Lieutenant Belt proposed that they should send for their provisions and lunch in one of the larger apartments. His motion, however, was overruled, the ladies especially objecting to sit down with the bats flying overhead, and the creatures they had seen crawling about round them. Still, they all lingered to examine more particularly the numberless curious formations, unwilling to bid farewell to the grotto, which few of them were likely again to visit. Perhaps, too, they hesitated to commence the undignified exit which they would have to make. The torches being nearly exhausted, Mr Twigg, looking at his watch, announced that it was time for luncheon.

"After which we must not delay in commencing our homeward journey," observed Mr Ferris, who had remembered Mrs Twigg's warnings.

With much laughter, Major Malcolm on this occasion leading the way, the whole party crept in succession through the opening of the cavern, and stood at length in the free air, their sensations reminding them of the feeling experienced on entering a hot-house. Major Malcolm had scarcely for a moment left Fanny Pemberton's side; he now escorted her back to the camp. His first inquiry of the servants was whether they had seen any strange negroes in the wood. The blacks all declared that they had not; but his own man, who had made an excursion by himself to the side of the lagoon, stated that while he was

looking towards the rock he saw some dozen or twenty black fellows steal out of a small opening and run off in an opposite direction, evidently, as he supposed, endeavouring to keep themselves concealed.

"Were they armed?" asked the major.

"Yes, sir; each man had a weapon of some sort—a spear or bow—in his hands, and two or three had firelocks," was the answer.

"That looks suspicious," thought the major; and he mentioned what his man had told him to Mr Ferris, who became very grave.

"Fortunately the fellows don't consider us enemies, or they might have shot us down with impunity," he observed. "There is something going forward among the blacks, I fear; and at all events the sooner we are on our return home the better."

An ample luncheon of fish, flesh, and fowl, vegetables, and fruit of every description had been prepared. It was hurried over somewhat rapidly; the servants were directed to pack up and proceed on their way homeward; and as soon as the tent was struck, the steeds, which had been tethered in the shade with their heads in nose-bags, were bridled and saddled.

"To horse! to horse! ladies and gentlemen," shouted Mr Twigg. "We must brave the heat and dust, instead of riding home by moonlight as we proposed; we shall enjoy the cool evening all the more on our arrival."

The younger members of the party, who had heard nothing of the cause which had created anxiety in the minds of Major Malcolm and Mr Ferris, were somewhat surprised at the summons, but quickly prepared to start.

"Let me assist you to mount, Miss Pemberton," said Major Malcolm. Leading forward her horse, and placing his hand a little above the ground, he dexterously lifted her into her saddle. Lieutenant Belt, imitating his example, brought forward Ellen's steed, and was delighted to find that she accepted his services, poor Archie being compelled to fall into the rear. The party on horseback led the way, the carriages rattling after them. Major Malcolm, who once having gone a road never forgot it, rode on with Miss Pemberton, Ellen and her cavalier following close behind them. They had just passed the cliff, when, the road being broad and level, Fanny proposed a canter.

They had ridden on about a mile further, when they saw, beneath the shade of the tall trees directly ahead, a horseman galloping at full speed towards them. As he approached he was seen to be a white-headed negro, his hat, which just then blew off, exposing his hoary locks.

"He is old Martin, Mr Twigg's butler," exclaimed Fanny. "What could have made him come out to meet us in so great a hurry?"

"Where Massa Twigg?" exclaimed the old man. "I tank Heaven I meet you so soon."

"He is close behind," answered Major Malcolm. "I trust that you are not the bearer of bad news?"

"Yes, sar, I bring berry bad news: we all hab our throats cut and be murdered and burnt before dis night," answered old Martin, who had fastened a huge silver spur to one of his heels, and had caught up a slave-driver's whip. Without waiting for further questions he galloped forward, leaving Major Malcolm and Miss Pemberton as ignorant as at first of what had occurred.

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## Chapter Fifteen.

**Mr Twigg rides forward to prepare for the defence of the house—The rest of the party follow—Encounter a party of blacks—Prove to be friends—The overseers incredulity—Preparations for defending the house—Doubts as to the truth of the reports—A fresh arrival brings alarming news—Mr Hayward's account of his escape—Scouts sent out—All hands labour at the fortifications—Major Malcolm and a party set off for Walton Hall—The insurgents appear and attack the house—Driven back—The siege—Provisions and water become scarce—A sortie to obtain water—The insurgents attempt to burn the stockades—Driven back by Belt and Archie—Another sortie to dig yams—Archie captured by the rebels.**

Mr Ferris was acting as charioteer to Mrs Twigg, and took the lead of the carriages.



"What's the matter?" she cried out, as she caught sight of old Martin galloping up, dreadful surmises, however, entering her mind.

"Oh, Missee Twigg, don't stop, and I tell you as you go along," answered the old butler, who having seen his master following behind, turned his horse round.

"Are the children all safe?" was the next question the anxious mother put.

"Yes, dey all berry well; but Martha tell me if I lub dere lives and yours to jump on horseback and come and tell you to make haste home. She say, and I know she speak de truth, dat de black fellows who run away to de mountains, and many oders, tousands and tousands from all de estates, hab got hold of firelocks and 'munition, and intend to murder all de whites in de island, from one end to de oder, and before night dey come and burn down Bellevue and cut de troats of us all. She say our only hope am to get aboard ship or make de house so strong dat we able to drive dem away when day come."

"How did Martha know this?" asked Mrs Twigg anxiously.

"Dat more nor I can tell," answered Martin. "All I know am dat she speak de truth."

"Then tell your master, and we will drive on as fast as we can," said Mrs Twigg. "Say Mr Ferris and I are considering what it will be best to do."

Martin, allowing Mr Twigg to come up with him, gave him the same account. Mr Twigg received the information with more composure than his wife had done. "Desert the house I will not," he answered. "We will fortify it, and defend ourselves like men. It is providential these two officers arrived with their troopers, as they will be of the greatest assistance; and if all the boys prove true, we shall have no difficulty in holding out against any attack, should one be made on us. Go back, Martin; send at once to find Mr Thompson. Say that I have reason fully to believe the information Martha has given; beg him to collect all the white men and trustworthy overseers, with their arms and ammunition. And also we must not forget our neighbours. Despatch a messenger—Jericho, Sambo, or any other fellow—to Mr Pemberton, and advise him either to join us with all his family, or to fortify his house as we intend doing ours. But stay, Martin. It may be safer, to prevent mistakes, if I go myself; a

gallop, though the sun is hot, won't kill me. I'll take your horse, and you shall drive the buggy."

The exchange was soon made, and Mr Twigg galloped forward, telling his wife as he passed what he proposed doing, and quickly dashing by Ellen and Fanny.

"Don't be alarmed, ladies," he cried out; "but the truth is we expect an attack from some blacks, who have broken out into rebellion, and we are going on to see what can be done to give them a warm reception."

"Surely, in that case, Major Malcolm, we ought not to detain you, as you will wish to assist in preparing for the defence of the house—for I conclude that is what Mr Twigg means," said Fanny in a calm tone.

"But we cannot leave you unprotected, Miss Pemberton," answered Major Malcolm. "Should the negroes really have risen, you might encounter some on the road, who would, seeing you alone, try to make you prisoners for the sake of holding you as hostages. I positively cannot leave you."

"Then we will gallop on together," said Miss Pemberton. "Miss Ferris's horse and mine are firm-footed, and I am sure that she will be ready to do as I propose."

She turned round to Ellen, who was perfectly willing to go on, and pressing their horses with their whips in a way which astonished the animals, they galloped forward. The road was dry and dusty, and in some places, where unsheltered by the trees, the sun beat down with intense heat; but in their anxiety they cared not for the inconvenience. On looking back they saw Mr Ferris and the other carriages coming along at almost as fast a rate as they were going. Gradually they were distancing them. Ellen was unwilling to leave her father behind.

"I am afraid that they are pursued by the blacks," she exclaimed. "Oh, should they be overtaken!"

"In that case Mr Ferris would far rather that you should escape," urged the lieutenant. "Let me entreat you not to stop; supposing the rebels are pursuing us, we could do nothing."

Still Ellen checked her horse till Mr Ferris again came in sight, when she heard him shouting, "Go on! go on!" and at the same time making signals with his whip as he lashed his horse. Poor Mrs Twigg was holding on to the carriage, expecting every

moment to be thrown out; but Mr Ferris, an experienced driver, kept a tight hand on the rein. Old Martin came dashing after him, standing up lashing his horse, and shrieking out at the top of his voice, "On! on! old nagger; no tumble down on oo knees!" while still farther off Jack Pemberton, Archie, and the other horsemen were seen acting as a rearguard, they, even if so inclined, not considering it respectful to pass the carriages. Ellen, on hearing her father's shouts, again applied her whip to her horse's flanks and galloped forward, much to the lieutenant's satisfaction. The major and Fanny could only dimly be seen amid the cloud of dust in the road, here darkened by overhanging trees.

"We cannot be very far, I trust, from Bellevue," said Ellen; "my horse appears to be flagging."

"The animal is but little accustomed to move at this rate with any one on its back. Be ready to check it should it stumble," answered the lieutenant; "but with your light weight there is very little chance of that. We have, I believe, but two miles to go, and we shall soon cover that ground. Don't spare the whip, Miss Ferris; you must think of your own safety more than the feelings of your steed."

Following Lieutenant Belt's advice, Ellen made her horse spring forward, and they at length again overtook Major Malcolm and Fanny. Just then a party of blacks were seen ahead, coming along the road towards them. Fanny was about to check her horse, fearing that they had evil intentions.

"If they are rebels we must dash by them—it is our best chance of escape," cried the major, drawing his sword. "I will defend you with my life, Miss Pemberton. Only keep up your courage and ride straight forward; they'll not dare to come within arm's length of us." Lieutenant Belt imitated the major's example, and said something of the same tenour to Ellen.

"But my father—they will attack him and Mrs Twigg!" she exclaimed.

"He has pistols in the carriage, and a shot or two will soon send the black fellows to the right-about," answered the major. They galloped forward, and their anxiety was quickly relieved on discovering that the blacks were headed by one of the book-keepers, who had been met by Mr Twigg and despatched along the road to render any assistance which might be required.

"All's safe at the house, sir, and it's my belief that the blacks on the estate will prove loyal, whatever may be the case elsewhere," observed the book-keeper.

"Go forward and obey your orders, sir," said the major; "we will ride on more leisurely to the house."

Fanny drew a deep breath. "I feel inexpressibly relieved," she said, "though I was sure, Major Malcolm, that you would have protected me; but I am more anxious about my father and mother and the rest of the family at Walton. It is more exposed even than Bellevue, and, though perhaps our own slaves may prove faithful, there are other estates on either side where the blacks are said to be harshly treated; and they may take the opportunity of revenging themselves on all the white people within their reach. I would rather go home at once to share their fate."

"I am very sure, Miss Pemberton, that should your family be in danger, they would not desire that you should be exposed to it," answered the major. "You yourself require rest—and, indeed, your steed would not carry you much further. I trust that the report which has alarmed us may prove to be without much foundation, and I will get Mr Twigg to send over at once to Walton and ascertain the state of affairs—or, if I find that Bellevue is safe, I will ride over myself to offer my services."

"Oh, thank you, thank you!" exclaimed Fanny; "I shall indeed be grateful."

Riding somewhat more leisurely than at first, though still keeping up a smart canter, they soon reached Bellevue, where they found that Mr Twigg had sent out to collect the book-keepers and drivers, white and brown, to assemble at the house for its protection. Major Malcolm's first inquiry was as to his means of defence.

"I have firearms, which I have kept ready in case of any outbreak such as that of '37, and all the white men on the estate have their fowling-pieces and pistols," he answered. "We fortunately procured a couple of casks of powder not long ago."

"Very good; but have you a supply of bullets?" asked the major.

"No—dear me, I am afraid not," said Mr Twigg.

"But you have moulds, surely, for casting them?" continued Major Malcolm.

"Yes; some are stored with the arms, I believe," was the answer.

"And what about lead?" asked the major. The worthy planter looked perplexed. "You must surely have some leaden pipes or cisterns, or lead in some form or other. Pray search in every direction, and I will set my two fellows to work at once to cast bullets, while we go round and consider the best means for fortifying the house. It is as well to be prepared, although I believe that, after all, it will prove a false alarm."

The ladies were more tired and overcome with the heat than they had expected while the excitement of riding lasted, and had to retire to their rooms. Mr Ferris soon arrived with Mrs Twigg, when she and her husband immediately sent for the black nurse, Martha, that they might ascertain from her whence she had obtained the alarming intelligence she had sent them. She would only reply, "I tell you, massa, what is de truth. I lub de children better than life; but I know when de black fellows find out dat I tell you, dey kill me. De Obeah man do it. Even though he not find me, I die—I know it; but if I save you and de children, I not care."

Nothing else could be elicited from Martha, but she persisted in declaring that they would find ere long that she had given no false alarm. Both Mr and Mrs Twigg, indeed, were convinced that she spoke the truth; and Mr Twigg went on with the preparations for the defence of the house. In a short time Mr Thompson, who had been at the further end of the estate, and several book-keepers came in.

"What has happened, Mr Twigg?" he exclaimed. "Sambo brought me a cock-and-bull story about a number of blacks being in arms, and coming down to burn and sack the house and murder us all. I don't believe it, sir. Our people, at all events, are kept in too good order to do anything of the sort; and I should have heard of any ill-feeling existing among the slaves in any of the neighbouring estates. I beg your pardon, sir—but it seems to me ridiculous to suppose that they would again attempt to rebel; they cannot have forgotten how they were treated the last time they ventured to rise in arms. Of course, gentlemen from England and military officers could not be expected to know anything about the matter, and they are therefore ready to believe the absurd reports."

"But I also, Mr Thompson, am inclined to believe that there is more in it than you suppose," answered the planter, "old Martin is evidently alarmed—and he is as sensible as he is faithful."

Still the overseer was incredulous. "I'll obey your orders, however, sir," he said, "and do anything you or the military officers think necessary to put the house in a state of defence."

"Very well, Mr Thompson; collect all the trustworthy people, and direct them to bring their arms and ammunition, and as large a stock of provisions as they have ready," replied Mr Twigg, "and we will follow out any plan Major Malcolm may suggest. He will, of course, take the command, and for our own sakes we shall be wise to obey his orders."

The overseer laughed. "Well, sir, we shall take a great deal of trouble for nothing," he said; "and should the military gentlemen order us to level the out-buildings, and to cut down the trees surrounding the house, we shall do more damage than can be easily repaired."

Several of the young men agreed with Mr Thompson, but Archie Sandys and Jack Pemberton sided with the other gentlemen. Martha remained as firm as at first in her belief that if they did not make haste and get ready to defend themselves, they would all be destroyed. The major's first care had been to see that the arms and ammunition were in a serviceable state. The former evidently required cleaning; with the powder he was satisfied. Though no leaden pipes were procurable, as bamboo canes serve every purpose for which the former are used in other countries, a leaden cistern and some pigs of lead which had been sent with the muskets were found, and the three troopers who had accompanied the major and his companion were set to work to cast bullets and clean up the arms; while the major, after twice making the circuit of the house, advised that it should be surrounded in the first place with a *chevaux-de-frise* of timber and stout bamboos sharpened at the ends, and that, if time would allow, inside that a palisade should be erected with loopholes for musketry and of a height sufficient to protect the garrison.

"At all events," he observed, "no harm can be done by collecting the materials for the purpose, and we can then proceed according to the information we receive."

This plan seemed so sensible that even Mr Thompson did not object to it, and all the available hands were divided into two parties—some sent to the nearest cane-brake to cut the canes, and others to fell trees. Night was approaching, and after the first few loads had been brought in, Mr Thompson suggested that they should wait till the following morning. Martha, who was eagerly watching all the proceedings, went to her master

and, with tears in her eyes, entreated that there might be no delay.

"I know what will happen dis berry night," she said; "if any one shut his eyes, perhaps no wake in de morning."

As the moon was nearly half full, there would be light. For some hours Mr Twigg accordingly directed that the people should continue their work. Most of the slaves seemed to labour willingly; but the drivers who were superintending them observed that they went lazily about their work, and did as little as they possibly could. Mr Thompson, on being told of this, remarked that it was no wonder, as they had been toiling all day, and it was not his custom to work the slaves after sundown, as was done on some ill-managed estates. As soon as the logs of wood and the canes were brought in, Major Malcolm and the lieutenant, with their men, having provided themselves with axes, threw off their coats and commenced cutting the logs and canes into proper lengths and showing how they were to be fixed in the ground. Between the canes which formed the *chevaux-de-frise* were planted large masses of prickly-pear, through which no ill-clad black, nor indeed any human being, could force his way. It was considered that this would stop the enemy even more effectually than the palisades. It was no easy task, however, to cut the sword-like leaves and place the plants in their required positions. The young Englishmen not otherwise employed offered their assistance, as did old Martin and the other black servants, in forming both the works, the latter managing to handle the prickly-pears far more dexterously without hurting themselves than their masters.

"We shall do no material harm to your lawn, Mrs Twigg," observed Major Malcolm, "and for your sake I trust that it may not become the scene of a conflict. By-the-by, Mr Twigg, if there is a serious chance of it we must barricade the doors and windows, and it will be prudent to have the materials ready for the purpose. If you have no spare planking, I have no doubt that one of the out-buildings will supply what we require."

Mr Twigg of course agreed to this, and, lantern in hand, led the way to a building at a little distance from the house.

"I advise you to have this pulled down at once; but if you are unwilling to do that, you can give directions to one of the young men, who will superintend the work should it become necessary," said the major.

Mr Twigg, having sent for Archie Sandys, told him what might be required, and he, of course, undertook to carry out his orders. Some time went by. The ladies having rested and partly recovered from their fatigue, assembled in the supper-room, in which a handsome repast was spread. Here they were joined by the gentlemen, who, having worked hard, had good appetites. No one would have supposed as they were seated round the table that they were apprehensive of the danger threatening them.

"It seems very ridiculous to be taking all this trouble and expending our strength on account of a vague report of which really nobody seems to know the origin," observed Lieutenant Belt to Ellen. "The major of course thinks there is something in it; but, for my part, I believe we shall find that we have all been frightened out of our wits for nothing."

"I wish that I could agree with you," answered Ellen. "There have been terrible outbreaks before in this island, and rumours have been for some time going about that the slaves are in a discontented state."

"I had expected, from the way our friends galloped after us this afternoon, that a body of savage rebels were at their heels," said the lieutenant, "and I confess that when we reached the house I fancied that we should have had to stand to our arms, and defend ourselves as best we could. I was very glad to see our hostess and Mr Ferris and the rest of the party arrive safely, and was somewhat surprised when no enemy followed them. We shall find, I suspect, that the foe did not come because no foe is in existence."

Ellen, however, could not agree with the young lieutenant.

Miss Pemberton's anxieties had been somewhat quieted. Mr Twigg assured her that he had sent a messenger to warn her father, who would of course make preparations to defend his house; she might soon therefore expect an answer saying that they were all safe. The party at length became more cheerful, and Mr Ferris expressed his belief that they might all go to sleep without fear of becoming dead men before the morning.

"Belt and I ought to be on our road at an early hour," remarked Major Malcolm; "but I wish before we go to see your fortifications in a forward state, and I shall then feel it my duty to ride round to Walton to render Mr Pemberton any assistance he may require."



Fanny was on the point of asking him to escort her, but a very natural feeling made her hesitate, and she resolved to remain with her friends. The conversation had become more lively than at first, and jokes and laughter were even being indulged in, when the sound of horses' hoofs was heard coming along the road from the east at a rapid rate. Mr Twigg hurried to the door, followed by Mr Ferris.

"Who is it?" asked the former.

"Hayward," answered a voice. "Thank Heaven I find you safe! I've had a narrow escape of my life, and I was afraid that you might be placed in equal danger; indeed, had it not been for my faithful fellow Tom Yam here, I should to a certainty have been killed."

"Come up, then, and tell us all about it," exclaimed Mr Twigg, who the next instant was shaking hands with the stranger, while Martin took charge of Tom Yam. Mr Twigg introduced the new arrival. Mr Hayward, sitting down, tossed off a glass or two of Madeira, for he required some stimulant before he could speak.

"I bring you dreadful news," he said. "I would thankfully not have to alarm you, ladies, but it may be better to know the worst at once. I had come over to Stillwater, having providentially left my family at Kingston, when, as I was resting after my journey, Tom Yam, who had been sent with a message to Fort Maria to ask Captain Torrens, commanding there, to come over and dine with me, rushed into my room panting for breath with the fearful news that the entire garrison and a number of white people from different places assembled there at dinner had suddenly been surprised by a whole host of blacks. The villains had been lying in ambush near at hand, and rushing upon them without warning, had put nearly every human being of the party to death. Among the few survivors was a black servant of one of the officers, who had given him the information. He himself had got near enough to see the blacks in possession of the fort, some engaged in burning down the buildings, and others carrying off the arms and ammunition. The boy told him that the white men were at the supper-table, and that all had there been butchered without being able to reach their arms or strike a blow for their defence. He hurried back, and as he came along he heard the negroes close at his heels, shouting and shrieking over their victory, and threatening to attack Stillwater House. Scarcely had he uttered the words than the cries of the barbarians reached my ears. Not a moment was to be lost; I hastily threw on my clothes and followed Tom,

who entreated me to run for the stable, where we could get our horses and gallop off as the best prospect of saving our lives, for if we attempted to hide ourselves the rebels were nearly sure to find us—many, indeed, of my own slaves having, as Tom assured me, joined them. So close were they by this time that I was afraid they would see us as we made our way to the stable. We reached it just as they broke into the grounds on the opposite side. Some time was lost in saddling the horses; as I led mine out, I saw several black faces peering out of the windows above us. I threw myself on the animal's back, Tom having mounted his horse inside the stable; a shower of bullets, happily ill aimed, came whizzing about our ears—two, indeed, passed through my jacket. Away I galloped, followed by Tom; though several more shots were fired at us, we escaped them all. Fortunately, there were no other horses in the stable or we should probably have been followed. As I looked over my shoulder I saw smoke ascending from the roof of the house, and ere I had got much further flames burst out from every part. At first I proposed pushing for Kingston, but Tom expressed his belief that we should find bands of rebels on the road, and I determined therefore to come on in this direction, and to warn any friends on the way. How our horses have done so much seems surprising, for you may be sure we took but a short time to rest. We passed on the way, I should say, several parties of blacks, but as they had no firearms, we dashed by them uninjured, although some made an attempt to stop us."

"Did you say, sir, that all the officers and men were massacred at Fort Maria?" asked Major Malcolm, in an agitated tone.

"I have too little doubt about it, sir," answered Mr Hayward. "I can trust Tom's word, and Captain Torrens's servant assured him that he saw his master and Ensign Duck murdered with the other white gentlemen."

"Only two days ago we dined with him, little thinking what was soon to occur!" said the major, with a sigh. "Poor fellow! poor fellow! how full of life and spirits he seemed! Such may be the fate of any one of us!"

Miss Pemberton looked sad as he spoke.

"You are now convinced, Mr Thompson, that there is something in the report we heard," observed Mr Ferris to the overseer, "and that we were not foolishly alarmed?"

"How soon do you think that the band of rebel blacks can reach Bellevue, should they come in this direction?" asked the major of Mr Hayward.

"They might be here in a day—and my belief is that there are several bands much nearer at hand, and that it would be wise to prepare for an attack without a moment's delay," answered Mr Hayward.

"Preparations have already been commenced," observed the major; "but I would urge our friend here to follow your advice."

"I am glad to hear it," replied Mr Hayward. "From the way the rebels made their attack on the fort, and the rapidity and order with which they retreated, it is evident that they are no contemptible foes, besides which, they have obtained a considerable store of arms. I will remain to assist you, for my horses could not proceed a mile further; and I should wish indeed, before I go on, to ascertain the state of the country to the westward. I fear from the report Tom gave that the slaves in the whole island are in a state of revolt."

"In that case our only wise course will be to barricade the house and throw up such other fortifications as time will allow," said Major Malcolm. "Mr Twigg, will you give the order to your people to bring in sufficient planking to close up all doors and windows, and we will then form a stockade round the house. Rouse up all the hands you can muster; they must work during the night, by the light of lanterns or torches or fires, if necessary. I will answer for your safety if the work is completed in time."

The worthy planter showed that he was a man of spirit—he immediately issued the necessary orders, and the overseer, now convinced that the report of the insurrection was founded on truth, ably seconded him. Coats were thrown aside, and the carpenter's tools in the house being collected, each person took such as he could best use, and, as soon as the wood was brought in, began sawing and nailing away with might and main. Others went on with the *chevaux-de-frise*, while a third party dug a trench and began erecting a palisade between it and the house. Major Malcolm and Lieutenant Belt were everywhere, showing the people how to put up the palisade and lending a hand to the work. Archie Sandys was especially active; the planter and Mr Ferris laboured away with hammer and nails in barricading the windows; while the three troopers who had accompanied the officers, having cast a sufficient store of bullets, came out and gave their valuable assistance. Major

Malcolm was too good a soldier to forget the importance of having timely notice of the approach of a foe, and had directed the overseer to select four trustworthy negroes, who were sent out to do duty as scouts, with orders to make their way back the moment they discovered the enemy.

"Can you entirely trust those fellows?" asked the major, after the men had been despatched.

"As to that, sir, I can't be answerable for their not running away, though I believe that they'll not willingly join the rebels," answered the overseer.

"Then we must not depend implicitly on them," said the major. "I must ask some of the young gentlemen to undertake the duty; Lieutenant Belt and one of my men will accompany them."

Archie Sandys, on hearing this, immediately volunteered, as did two other of the book-keepers. The party made their way for some distance in the direction it was expected that the rebels would appear; and, leaving Archie in a sheltered spot, the lieutenant conducted the others round, posting first one and then the other in positions in which they could command a view of the different approaches, so that on whatever side the enemy might come, time would be given to the garrison to prepare for their reception. All the men who had been collected continued diligently engaged in erecting the fortifications, and were thus employed when daylight returned. The works were by this time in a tolerably forward state, and were of a character well calculated to resist an attack by an undisciplined and ill-armed force, though they would have been useless against artillery or well-trained troops. No one proposed stopping for breakfast, for all saw the importance of getting the works completed before the arrival of the foe. The house standing high, and a good view over the country round being obtained from it, there was no necessity to keep the sentries at their posts during the daytime. The lieutenant accordingly went out to call them in. They had seen nothing of the black scouts—as the overseer had thought probable, they had run away and hidden themselves. They, however, came back during the morning, each one bringing the same account—"All right, massa, no enemy come yet."

"You hid yourselves, you rascals," said Mr Twigg.

"Ki Massa Twigg, de ossifer tell hide selves," answered one of the scouts.

"But you went to sleep, Quasho, into the bargain, I suspect," observed the planter.

"If ever shut eyes, hear all de same, massa," replied Quasho, with perfect coolness.

It was not a time to inflict punishment if it could be avoided, and the negroes were ordered to assist at the work going forward.

It was past noon before the fortifications were completed. They were in such a form that the enemy attacking any portion would be exposed either to a flanking or a cross fire. The major surveyed them with evident satisfaction.

"Provided our ammunition does not run short, we shall be able to hold out for a siege of any length against such enemies as are likely to attack us," he observed to Mr Twigg; "although, as the rebels have not appeared, I think it possible they may not come at all."

"I trust not, major; but we shall be deeply indebted to you notwithstanding," answered the planter. "Now, after your labours, come in and have some breakfast."

The major willingly accepted the invitation, and found to his satisfaction the ladies ready to receive him. Miss Pemberton gave him a grateful smile, but he thought she still looked anxious. She confessed that she was so on account of her family. Would she wish to send assistance to them? he asked.

"Indeed, I would," she answered; "for, though our house can be more easily fortified and defended than this can, there are fewer trustworthy people to form its garrison."

"Would you wish me to go, Miss Pemberton?" asked the major. "I would," he added, speaking very low, "run every risk for your sake. I, of course, would not offer to quit Bellevue unless I considered that it already possessed a sufficiently strong garrison; indeed, I think it probable that it will not be attacked, or if it is, that the insurgents will very quickly retire when they see the preparations we have made for their reception."

"Oh, it will indeed greatly relieve my mind if assistance could be carried to Walton!" exclaimed Fanny.

"Then I will go, and will leave Belt here with two of our men. Your brother will, I conclude, wish to accompany me," said the major.

"So will I," said Mr Hayward, "with my man Tom. We shall not too greatly weaken the garrison of this place, and we may render essential assistance to the Pembertons."

Mr Twigg, though he possibly might rather have kept his friends, could not object to this proposal, and Major Malcolm immediately desired that the horses might be got ready. Several white men and mulattoes had come in from two small plantations in the neighbourhood on hearing of the rebellion, knowing that it would be hopeless to attempt the defence of their homes; and three of these, who were well mounted and armed, volunteered to accompany Major Malcolm and Mr Hayward. Fanny thanked the major more by her looks than in words, as she bade him farewell. The party, throwing themselves into their saddles, rode off, setting the heat at defiance. They had been gone scarcely half an hour when Archie Sandys, who was doing duty as sentry, and had posted himself on a height from whence he could command a view of most of the approaches to the house on the east and south, came hurrying in with the information that he had seen a large body of blacks moving along from the latter direction. "They looked exactly like a swarm of ants as they came over the hill," he observed. "Hark! you can already hear the shrill notes of their horns."

"Then to arms, my friends!" cried the lieutenant. "We must man our lines, but don't let a shot be fired till I give the order."

All arrangements had previously been made; each gentleman having a certain number of men placed under him, while the two orderlies were to act as the lieutenant's aides-de-camp. To each party was assigned the defence of a certain portion of the lines, so that the moment the order was issued the entire garrison knew where they were to go. Notwithstanding the absence of Major Malcolm and those who had accompanied him, they felt secure in their numbers and fortifications.

The shouts and shrieks of the rebels and the sound of their horns were now distinctly heard as they hurried on to attack the house, fully expecting to surround it, and in a few minutes to massacre the inhabitants, as they had done those of several other pens they had already attacked, little dreaming of finding it so strongly garrisoned and fortified.

"Keep under cover, my men," cried the lieutenant, as the enemy were seen marching from the wood and running forward without order into the open; "our fire will stagger them, and probably make them scamper off, if we reserve it till they come sufficiently near for each man to take a good aim. Don't throw a bullet away. Aim low, remember—aim low!"

As the rebel blacks advanced, they discovered that there was something unusual about the house, and at length began to suspect that it was fortified in a way to which they were unaccustomed. They accordingly halted, and were seen talking eagerly to each other, while they held their muskets pointing towards the building.

Their leader, whom Archie recognised as the ugly negro he had seen at the Jumby dance, went among them vociferating loudly, and endeavouring to induce them to advance. Thus encouraged, they rushed forward, firing their muskets; many of them, who had put the butts against their eyes, being knocked over by the recoil as they did so. Some fired at one moment, some at another, with the greatest possible irregularity, many of the bullets flying over the house, others striking the roof.

"Let them expend their ammunition as fast as they like in that style," cried the lieutenant, laughing; "they will not do us much harm. It is not worth replying to such a salute."

The lieutenant's remarks greatly encouraged his men, who waited patiently to fire in return.

"Now give it them, my lads!" he at length cried out, when the blacks had got within fifty yards of the palisade. The order was obeyed, and as the smoke cleared away the rebels were seen running off at full speed, leaving five of their number on the field; and from the way others retreated, leaning on their companions, it was evident that several more were wounded. They, however, halted immediately they got beyond gunshot, having no intention, apparently, of retreating altogether. They were now seen assembled as before, a vast amount of talking taking place among them, while their leaders rushed hither and thither urging them to renew the attack. But this it at first seemed they were little inclined to do; most of them, indeed, sat down on the ground as if determined not to advance.

"I believe if we were to sally out and charge them we might put them all to flight," exclaimed Archie Sandys, who, his Highland blood being up, was full of fight.

"Don't attempt anything of the sort," said Lieutenant Belt, who showed that he possessed the qualities so important for a soldier of coolness as well as of courage. "We might drive those immediately in our front before us, but we should have their companions on our flanks and be to a certainty cut off, or have to fight our way back again. As long as they keep where they are they can do us no harm."

It was especially trying to the garrison to see their enemies sitting down quietly just out of the reach of their bullets, without permission to attack them. The day was waning, and in all probability the blacks would make another attack at night, when they would have a better chance of getting near without being discovered. All the time their cries and shrieks, and the blowing of their horns, were heard from all sides; then came the sound of other horns in the distance, which were answered with loud blasts from the rebels surrounding the house.

"I am afraid that the rascals have been reinforced," observed Mr Twigg. "As they increase in numbers they will grow bolder, and we shall have harder work to drive them off."

"Don't be anxious about that," answered the lieutenant; "as long as our men prove true we shall have no difficulty in keeping them at bay, and we may hope in time that troops will be sent to assist us, as well as others who may be attacked. I hope that many planters will have wisely taken the precautions you have done, and fortified their houses."

"My belief is that Mr Pemberton will have done so," answered Mr Ferris; "if not, I fear that Major Malcolm will be unable to render him much assistance."

Weary from hard work as all the garrison were, they could not venture to take any rest, except such as they could obtain by sitting with their backs to the palisades or the wall of the house, with their muskets by their sides, ready for instant service. Lieutenant Belt, who felt the responsibility resting on his shoulders, divided the other gentlemen into two watches, so that one party might be continually going round to see that the sentries were on the alert. As it was fully expected that the rebels would make a sudden attack during the dark hours of night, he himself felt that he must dispense with sleep.

"I quite envy you," said Archie, who accompanied him. "I wish that I had been a soldier; this work just suits me."



"You might soon get tired of it. If it were to become the sole occupation of your life, you would begin to sigh for rest and long for a quiet life, I can tell you," was the answer.

None of the men appeared inclined to sleep at their posts, for they all well knew that their lives depended on their vigilance.

After some time had elapsed, several dusky forms could be seen creeping up towards the house, as if to ascertain what the garrison were about.

"Keep silence," whispered the lieutenant to the men, as he went his rounds; "when they get near enough we will show them that we are wide awake. The blacks can then be picked off by any good marksmen among you." As he spoke, the lieutenant's voice may have been heard, or the negroes may have observed the heads of the sentries above the palisades, for they suddenly disappeared under cover.

Towards the morning the darkness increased, and the garrison redoubled their vigilance, every moment expecting an attack, for the rebels might have got close up to the house without being discovered.

The ladies, meantime, with the nurses and children, had been placed in one of the lower rooms, into which it was believed no shot could penetrate. Mr Ferris had urged them, in case of an attack, to lie down, so that, should any balls make their way through the planking, they might pass over their heads.

"But surely we can help in some way or other," exclaimed Fanny. "We might load the muskets, even if we do not fire them; and if any of our defenders are wounded, we will come out and take their places with the rest."

"I will do my best, but I do not feel that I could try to kill the poor blacks," answered Ellen.

"They deserve to be killed," exclaimed Miss Pemberton, "for daring to rebel against their masters." She spoke as a planter's daughter.

"Perhaps we might better employ ourselves in attending to any of our defenders who are unfortunately wounded," observed Mrs Twigg, who knew Ellen's sentiments, and did not wish to enter into any discussion on the subject.

"I trust that, now they have seen the preparations made for their reception, the rebels will not attempt to attack the house," said Mr Ferris. "All I beg you to do is to remain quiet, and to keep up your spirits. Perhaps in the morning we shall find the blacks have retreated, and gone off to attack some more defenceless houses. However, if any of the people are wounded, we will place them under your care. In the mean time, let me entreat you to lie down and get some rest."

Somewhat reassured by his remarks, the ladies followed his advice; and, except the sentries and the officers on guard, the greater number of the inmates of the house might have been found fast asleep. Not a sound was heard throughout the building, nor was a light shown which might attract the notice of the rebels. Occasionally their voices and the shrill blasts of their horns could be heard rising out of the valley, but even the keenest pair of eyes among the garrison failed to detect a single object moving in any direction.

Day at length broke, and it was hoped that the enemy might have disappeared; but as the light increased, the blacks were seen amid the openings of the trees, collected in still greater numbers than on the previous evening, while in the far distance parties were observed moving across the country, some approaching the house, others going in the direction of Walton.

"I fear that the major and his companions have had some difficulty in reaching Mr Pemberton's house," observed Lieutenant Belt to Archie Sandys. "If he could not get in, he will have gone on to Montego, or some place to the westward where he might hope to obtain troops to relieve us."

"But suppose that he has encountered some such large gang of armed blacks as those we see out yonder; he and his companions must have been shot down, for what could so small a party do against a whole host of enemies?" answered Archie.

"That depends upon how his followers behave. If they prove staunch and obey his orders, they may put any number of armed undisciplined blacks to fight," said the lieutenant. "Still I own that I shall be glad to have tidings of him. What the fellows round this house intend doing, I cannot make out; but I conclude that they prefer fighting in daylight rather than in the dark, and that we must expect to be attacked before long. In the mean time, I shall be glad to have some breakfast and a few minutes' sleep. Do you take my place, and let me be called if you detect the slightest movement among the blacks." Saying this, the lieutenant went into the house, through the only door

which had been left open. Preparations had also been made for barricading that, should it become necessary.

The house, it must be understood, was to form the citadel, should the outer defences be forced or should there be a prospect of their being so. With this object in view, loopholes had been formed in all the doors and windows, from whence a warm fire could be poured down upon the assailants. Still the rebels did not venture to approach nearer. Archie and the others began heartily to wish that the blacks would attack them, not doubting for a moment what would be the result. Hour after hour went by, but no movement was perceived. Still it could scarcely be hoped that the rebels had given up all intention of assaulting the house.

A stock of provisions had been collected, but there were many mouths to consume them, and no one had expected that the siege would last beyond a day or two, as all supposed that, after being defeated in the first attack, the blacks would take to flight. The consumption of water was also considerable, and it was found that nearly all had been used up. The well which supplied it was at some little distance from the house. Water, however, must be obtained at all hazards. Archie undertook to lead a party with buckets to get what was wanted: it would be more easy to do that at night than in the daytime. But thirst can be ill endured in that burning climate; Archie therefore cried out for a dozen volunteers, six to carry the buckets, and six, fully armed, to defend them should they be attacked. The well was little more than a hundred yards off, while the nearest blacks who could be seen were at the distance of four hundred yards off at least, but others might be concealed nearer at hand.

Six white men, book-keepers and others, volunteered to accompany Archie; the remainder, who were to carry the buckets, were blacks. They crept along till they got directly opposite the path which led to the well; headed by Archie, they at once rushed down towards it. The rebels at first made no movement, apparently not understanding what they were about; then some of those in front began to retreat, thinking that they were to be attacked, and evidently not prepared for this. They soon, however, discovered the object of the garrison; it showed them also, what they might not before have been aware of, that there was a scanty supply of water in the house. Summoned by their leaders, they began to advance, and as they did so fired at Archie and his companions. In the mean time, the bucket-bearers had obtained the water, and were retreating up the hill.

"Don't fire," cried Archie, "till their bullets come whizzing about our ears. Steady now!" And his men retreated towards the house, looking over their shoulders to see how far off the enemy still were. As soon as the slaves had carried the water safely inside, the armed men turned round and fired a volley which stopped the advance of the rebels. Then, making a rush, Archie and his companions leaped over the palisades, the whole garrison at the same moment opening fire on the advancing enemy, who, having failed in their object of cutting off the watering party, took to their heels.

None of the rebel blacks were killed, though some apparently were hit, but not one of the garrison was hurt. This was the chief event of the day. Enough water to last them four and twenty hours at least was obtained, and Archie proposed getting some more at night, when it could be done with less risk. Food, however, began to grow scarce; the fresh meat and fowls had become uneatable, and much anxiety was felt as to the means of obtaining more provisions. The kitchen garden and the yam grounds, being at the foot of the hill, were in possession of the rebels. Of course the garrison was put on an allowance both of food and water, the ladies setting the example to the rest. They now began to look out anxiously for relief. The news of the insurrection must have reached Kingston and the other large towns where soldiers were quartered; and of course troops, with the militia and even the maroons, who it was hoped would prove loyal, would at once be despatched to disperse the rebels. Should Major Malcolm not have reached Walton, but have made his way to Montego, he would there, it was supposed, take command of some of the garrison of the fort and the militia, who mustered in pretty strong numbers, and would quickly return.

The day was drawing towards its close. The blacks had made no movement, nor could any friends be seen approaching from the west. The planter and his overseer and Archie made frequent visits to the roof of the house, whence they could obtain the most extensive view, and Archie, who was the last to go up, watched the sun sinking into the west and darkness come on without having any satisfactory intelligence to give on his return, he felt more out of spirits than he had ever before done in his life. Not on his own account, however, for he wished that the blacks would attack the house, as he was ready to fight to the death, and felt confident that they would be driven off. He was sincerely attached to Mr Twigg's family, and he thought of the two young ladies—especially of Ellen, to whom he had lost his heart—and dreaded the hardships to which they all might be

exposed; indeed, he could not conceal from himself that they might be in still more terrible danger than at present. Lieutenant Belt, who had wisely taken some hours' sleep, rose refreshed and ready for the work before him. He forthwith went round among the men, urging them to be on the alert, and telling them that he fully believed the blacks would make an attack before long.

"Don't be daunted by their shrieks and cries, my men," he said. "Depend upon it, they will not stand before a few well-aimed volleys from your muskets. Don't fire till you get them well in view, and then aim at their bodies. 'Let every bullet have its billet,' and I will answer for it we shall beat them off."

The men answered with a cheerful "Ay, sir."

Still the rebels hung back. Perhaps they guessed that the garrison were in want of provisions, and had wisely determined to starve them out. Their proceedings were evidently conducted by chiefs who well understood the art of savage warfare. Midnight arrived; the faint moon, though it had lasted longer than on the previous night, had disappeared. Archie proposed again leading out a party to obtain water, and he was on the point of starting, when one of the sentries cried out, "The enemy are coming!" The warning was repeated by others, and a black mass could be seen stealing up the hill, the men bending low in the hope of escaping discovery till they had got close up to the fortifications.

"Don't let them know that we see them," whispered the lieutenant, as he went round to the men; "the effect will be the greater when they receive our fire."

The little garrison stood to their arms.

Onward marched the insurgents, moving up the hill like a dark wave rolling slowly forward. They could be clearly distinguished, all bending low to the ground, as they crossed the more open places exposed to the bright moonlight. On and on they came, but still not a sign was shown by the garrison that they were perceived. They must have known, however, that they could not get close up to the fortifications without being discovered. Suddenly, at a signal from their leaders, up they rose to a man, uttering the most terrific shrieks and howls, and, rushing forward, fired their muskets. Thick as hail the bullets came rattling against the palisades and the upper portions of the house, some chipping off splinters from the tops of the timbers, others sticking in the wood, others penetrating through the

interstices. None of the garrison, however, were killed, but several were slightly wounded, though not in a way to compel them to leave their posts.

"Now, give it the rascals!" cried the lieutenant, as the blacks were within a dozen yards of the palisades. Every man fired, and many of the blacks were seen struggling back or falling to the ground. Their companions, excited to fury by the rum they had obtained from some of the plundered estates, sprang forward without noticing them, shouting and shrieking and throwing themselves desperately against the *chevaux-de-frise*, forgetting the hedge of prickly-pear which had been entwined amidst it. With cries of dismay as the sharp points pierced their legs and wounded their hands, they fell back in spite of the efforts of their chiefs to urge them on, thus giving the garrison time to reload.

"Now fire at them, my lads, and the day is ours," cried the lieutenant. His men obeyed the order, and once more the negroes rushed away helter-skelter, nor would listen to the entreaties of their leaders to stop till they reached the bottom of the hill. "I think we have done for them this time," exclaimed Lieutenant Belt, in a tone of exultation. The same opinion was expressed by most of the garrison.

"There are some desperate fellows among them, or they would not have come on in the way they have already done," observed the overseer.

Many of the slaves had lately been imported from Africa, and were likely to pursue their native mode of fighting, which, it was too probable, would enable them to obtain that success which they had hitherto failed to gain. A short time passed away, during which the blacks maintained a perfect silence. It was hoped by many within the house that they were about to retreat, when lights were seen suddenly to burst forth along the whole line, and gradually to approach. It appeared at first as if a dark wall was rising out of the valley, but this shortly resolved itself into huge faggots carried at the end of poles. Between every two or three of the faggots was seen a torch, too evidently for the purpose of kindling the wood.

"Good heavens! they are going to try and set our fortifications on fire, and the house also, I fear, if they can," exclaimed Mr Twigg.

"And they will succeed too, I am afraid," said the overseer gloomily. "I was sure they had some accursed trick in contemplation."

"What do you advise, Lieutenant Belt?" asked Mr Ferris, who remained more collected than any one else.

"We must make a sortie and drive them back before they reach our lines," answered the lieutenant. "I will lead it myself, and I am sure I shall not want followers."

Archie was the first volunteer, and nearly a dozen more white men immediately sprang forward. Not a moment was to be lost.

"Come on, my lads," cried the lieutenant. "We must make our sortie by the outlet leading to the well. We will then get round and attack them on the flank; and, remember, the remainder of the garrison must keep up a hot fire as they come on at the rest of the line, aiming at the black fellows' bodies, not at their faggots, which they will hold before them as shields."

Saying this, he led out his brave band of followers, Archie keeping close to him. They had got within sixty yards or so from the blacks before they were perceived, when, firing their muskets—the garrison, meantime, not neglecting their duty, but blazing rapidly away—they drew their cutlasses and threw themselves fiercely on the enemy. So little did the negroes appear to expect the attack that they threw down their bundles of wood, to which their torches, let drop at the same time, set fire, and retreated in confusion. As they ran off, they encountered another well-armed party of their friends, who were coming up the hill, either to support them or to attempt carrying the fortification by assault during the confusion they expected the blazing stockades would produce. On seeing the white men before them, they fired a volley. Instead of running away, however, they still advanced boldly up the hill.

"Load, my lads, and meet them bravely," cried the lieutenant—"you have time for it—but do not retreat, or we are lost." As he spoke, Archie, who was near him, heard the thud of a bullet, and had just time to catch the brave young officer in his arms before he fell.

"We must not let these savages get hold of him," exclaimed Archie to his companions, taking the lieutenant up on his back. "You keep the enemy in check, and I will carry him to the house."

He instantly did as he proposed, the blacks shouting and shrieking after him as he ran, but not daring to advance farther, while the rest of the party, loading and firing as they retreated—the garrison at the same time redoubling their fire—kept the enemy in check, and Archie succeeded in bringing in the wounded officer. The intention of the blacks was thus frustrated; for, though most of the faggots were blazing away, they were at a safe distance from the house.

The lieutenant was carried into a room and laid on a bed, where Mrs Twigg and Martha immediately came and examined his wound. It was in the shoulder, and though the sudden pain had made him drop, as far as they could judge, it did not appear to be serious. He soon recovered after taking a stimulant. He begged them to bind up his shoulder that he might go forth and resume his command. The operation was soon performed, and as he again appeared he was received with warm congratulations. The other people who had been hurt had also gone in to have their wounds dressed. Happily none had been killed, notwithstanding the number of bullets fired at them.

Every one now believed that the blacks would abandon their enterprise, but, though foiled so frequently, no signs could be perceived of their retreating. They had managed to carry off those of their number who had been killed, and were now bewailing their loss in African fashion, with shrieks and cries which came up sounding mournfully from the valley below.

"I think we have given the rebels a lesson, and need no longer fear an attack," observed Mr Ferris.

"We must not make too sure yet," said the overseer. "Had we only island-born blacks to deal with, the case would be different; but there are a lot of Coromantees, the most savage of the African people, who are at the bottom of all this, and they will fight like tiger-cats as long as life remains in them. They won't be satisfied, if they can have their will, till they burn us and the house in a heap. They will try it again, or I am much mistaken."

The events which have just been described occupied but a few short minutes. The blazing faggots went out without setting fire to the plantations, of which there was imminent risk, and all was again quiet. Even the blacks had ceased shrieking and howling. Though the garrison had hitherto been successful, if they were to hold out for a protracted siege more water and food must be procured, and again Archie Sandys volunteered to obtain both. By taking due precautions he was able to lead a



party down to the well, and to get back without being discovered by the rebels. In another direction, and rather further from the house, was a plantation of yams. A few basketfuls would afford subsistence to all the party for a day or more. Of course, rather than starve, they must kill one of the horses which were tethered at the back of the house within the lines. The companions of Archie's previous expedition volunteered to accompany him, but he considered it more prudent to take only the blacks, who might dig up the roots and carry them in, while he stood sentinel to warn them to fly should they be discovered.

"You're a brave fellow," said Lieutenant Belt, "and I wish you success, but I tell you I think your expedition a hazardous one."

"Nothing worth having is to be obtained without trouble," answered Archie. "I have a good pair of legs, and can jump a fence with any one. The food must be procured, and I will get it if I can; only, should I be pursued, cover me with your fire, but take care none of our people shoot me or any of my companions."

Saying this, Archie set out, followed by his six blacks, carrying baskets and spades. He had his cutlass by his side, a brace of pistols in his belt, and his musket in his hand. As there was ample shelter down to the yam ground, the lieutenant hoped that his friend would not be discovered. One thing was very certain, that, should the enemy come upon them, the slaves would scamper away in all directions, and very likely make their escape.

Before Archie set out, every man had been stationed at his post, to be ready for the rebels should they approach. They stood anxiously waiting his return. At length one of the slaves appeared, loaded with a basket of yams; a second and a third followed, and they repelled that Massa Sandys had made them fill one basket at a time, and had sent them off so as at all events to secure some. They were looking out for a fourth man, when two people were seen rushing up the hill without baskets on their heads. A third followed, but scarcely was he visible, when a shot was heard and he dropped to the ground.

"We must go and rescue Mr Sandys," cried the lieutenant; "he must have fallen into the hands of the rebels."

"If so, the poor fellow is dead by this time," said the overseer.

The report of the two blacks who now came tended to confirm this latter opinion. A party of negroes had suddenly sprung out from a neighbouring cover as they had just got their baskets on their heads to come away, when, throwing down their loads, they had made off, though the hindermost had been nearly caught; and it was more than probable that Mr Sandys, who was stopping to cover their retreat, had been unable to escape. This was the saddest event which had hitherto occurred, and all sincerely grieved for his loss.

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## **Chapter Sixteen.**

**Major Malcolm proceeds towards Walton Hall—Suspicious circumstances—The party cut their way through the rebels and gain the house—Preparations for an attack—The rebels attempt to storm the house with ladders and firebrands—Beaten back—An expedition to follow the rebels—Major Malcolm and his party set out—Jack Pemberton tries to reach Bellevue—Finds it still besieged—Retreats—Quashie sent with a message to Bellevue—Succeeds in getting in—A novel flag of distress hoisted—A fierce attack made on the house—The stockades set on fire—Blacks again driven back—Cudjoe offers to abandon the siege if the overseer is given up—Ammunition of the defenders almost exhausted—The overseer shot—Another fierce attack made by the blacks on the house.**

Major Malcolm, influenced by the admiration he felt for Fanny Pemberton—if a deeper feeling had not already inspired him—had set out from Bellevue for the purpose of warning her family of the danger to which they were exposed, and, if he found it necessary, remaining to assist in their defence. He had intended, immediately he could do so, to ride on to Montego, to bring up such forces as he could collect, and to disperse the rebels wherever they could be found; but from the information his companions gained as they rode along, that large bands of rebels were already in arms in the intermediate country, he feared that he should be unable to force his way through them unless with a stronger party than he now had with him. He was acting according to his judgment for the best. He certainly could, not leave his friends at Bellevue without as soon as possible sending them assistance, while most of his present

companions were bound to go on to Walton with young Pemberton. As they pushed forward as fast as their horses could go, they frequently caught sight of negroes, three and four together, who invariably ran away from them. A few old men and women in a great state of alarm were, however, found in the villages. They said that the younger men had run off to hide themselves, asserting that they were afraid of the rebels. But it seemed doubtful whether such was the case, or whether they had gone to join them. Jack Pemberton, who acted as guide, now told the major that they were approaching Walton Hall, and pointed out a house situated on an eminence, the ground sloping round it. On one side, up which the road led to the front door, the ascent was more gradual than on the others.

"I am in great hopes, sir, that the rebel negroes, notwithstanding what we heard, have not got here yet," said Jack Pemberton. "If they have we must look out for them, for they cannot be far off, and we shall see them as soon as we have passed this wood."

He led the way to the left round a grove of tall trees, when, in an open space which intervened between the wood and the foot of the hill on which the house stood, a large body of blacks were seen marshalling their forces, evidently preparing to attack the place. The party of horsemen were soon discovered, and the negroes, three or four hundred in number at least, faced about, and seeing a few white men, with their usual shrieks and shouts advanced to attack them.

"Now, my friends," exclaimed the major calmly, "we must cut our way through these fellows. Trust to your swords, keep close together, and follow me. Forward!" and putting spurs to his horse, he dashed on. In another minute he was up to the black mass; and striking right and left with his sword, he quickly cleared a broad way for his companions, who, following close at his heels, had scarcely to use their weapons. A few shots only were fired at them, as the band apparently had but a small supply of muskets or pistols. The trooper brought up the rear, and as he saw the blacks attempting to close on him, quickly again drove them back.

"On! on!" shouted the major, "make your horses breast the hill, and we shall soon be under shelter."

Before the negroes had recovered from their astonishment the whole party were up the hill, and the doors being thrown open by those within, who saw their approach, they forced the horses

up the broad steps into the house. Here they were of course heartily welcomed by the planter and his family.

His first question was for his daughter. "We have had dreadful reports about Bellevue, that it was about to be attacked by the whole army of insurgents; and I was on the point of setting off to assist our friends, when those fellows down there made their appearance," said Mr Pemberton, a portly, handsome-looking man with a bald head.

The major replied that he had done his best to place the house in a state of defence, and, as no enemy had appeared, that he had come at the request of Miss Pemberton to the relief of Walton, which it was also reported was to be attacked.

"I am afraid, however, as the rebels have favoured us with a visit, that the rumour with regard to Bellevue is also likely to prove true," said Mr Pemberton, after warmly expressing his gratitude to Major Malcolm. "But with your assistance we can easily beat off our assailants. The house has stout walls, and we have, as you see, barricaded the windows and doors. We are amply provisioned, and have a supply of ammunition, so that we can hold out during a long siege should the insurgents venture to remain in our neighbourhood, which is not, I think, likely. But perhaps, major, as a soldier, you will think fit to look round the house, and see if we have left any weak points unguarded."

"Very willingly," was the answer; and the planter led his visitor through the building.

The front of the house was well fortified, but when they arrived at the back premises Major Malcolm pointed out more than one place through which a subtle enemy might easily find an entrance during the hours of darkness.

"See," he observed, "they might make their way along under the shelter of that wall and reach this window and door, which might easily be forced with a few strokes of a roughly constructed battering-ram. I don't know if these negroes have sense to use such an engine of war, but the knaves with whom I had to do in India would very certainly have made the attempt."

The place pointed out was accordingly more strongly barricaded, and the major suggested a few other improvements.

"I feel satisfied," he said at length, "that you are perfectly secure as long as your provisions and ammunition hold out. My only regret is that Miss Pemberton did not accompany us. She was more anxious about you than about herself, as we fully believed that Bellevue was sufficiently well fortified to resist any attack the rebels are likely to make against it."

The worthy planter was much pleased with Major Malcolm, and especially grateful to him for coming to his assistance and bringing back his son.

Of course a watch was kept on the movements of the rebels, sentinels being stationed on the roof at each side of the house to give due notice of their nearer reproach. They showed no disposition to attack it during the daytime. It was naturally expected, however, that they would do so at night, should they entertain any hope of success. It was difficult otherwise to account for their remaining in the neighbourhood.

Major Malcolm expressed his wish to continue his journey, and Mr Hayward was anxious to accompany him, that they might carry out their intention of collecting all the available military and militia for the purpose of attacking the rebels wherever they could be met with. Mr Pemberton, as might be supposed, was desirous of retaining them.

"My dear sir," he observed, "it is a very different thing to cut your way up to a fortress in the gallant style you did, and to force a road through an enemy on leaving it. In the one case, you at once gain shelter, and in the other are open to the pursuit of the foe. Your party, too, will be diminished, and you may be surrounded by overwhelming numbers, in contending with whom the most determined bravery will not avail."

Major Malcolm saw the force of this reasoning, and agreed to remain till the following morning. Besides the book-keepers, overseers, drivers, and other free persons employed on the estate who formed the garrison of the house, there were several guests, planters and their families, from the neighbouring small properties, who had come to Walton for protection, knowing that they could not hold out should they be attacked in their own houses. They all brought rumours of the massacre of numerous families of whites. On still more distant estates one or two like Mr Hayward had narrowly escaped with their lives. Notwithstanding this, when they all assembled round Mr Pemberton's hospitable board, few of them looked like people who had been exposed to fearful danger, and were at any moment liable to have to fight with a savage foe. Some of

them, it is true, uttered threats of bitter vengeance on the heads of the villainous slaves, as they called the blacks; but they passed the bottle freely, and talked, and even laughed, as if nothing special was happening.

Major Malcolm was surprised at their apparent indifference to danger.

"*Carpe diem* is my motto," observed a jovial, bald-headed gentleman, who sat next to him. "It does not do to think too much of to-morrow. 'Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.' Of course our pockets will suffer, but the rebellion will be quickly put down, and all things will come right in the end."

"I only hope so," observed the major; but he thought to himself, "If you were to treat your slaves justly, and do your utmost to instruct them, there would be less fear of outbreaks for the future." He did not say this aloud, however, for he saw that his neighbour was not in a mood to listen calmly to such a remark.

Major Malcolm was more pleased with the lady of the house than with any of her guests. He had a good deal of conversation with her, the most interesting subject being her daughter, of whom she was justly proud, and she expatiated on her perfections with all a mother's fondness. He won the good opinion both of his host and hostess, who begged that he would again favour them with a visit on the first opportunity, when they hoped that the country would be restored to peace.

The evening passed away quietly. So little was an attack expected that some of the guests proposed retiring to their rooms.

"You will run the risk, my friends, of being roused up in an unpleasant manner," said their host in a warning voice; "the very silence of the rebels is, I suspect, ominous of their evil intentions."

Major Malcolm agreed with him, and advised that a vigilant watch should be kept, offering to take command of the fortress. Jack begged that he might be allowed to act as his aide-de-camp. Like a good officer as he was, the major made frequent rounds of the house, seeing that the sentries kept a good look-out, and again examining every portion of the building to assure himself that no point remained unguarded through which an enemy might force his way. He went also, occasionally, on the roof, whence he could command an extensive view over the

country. On each occasion he turned his glance especially in the direction of Bellevue, though he discovered nothing to cause him anxiety. He was about to descend, when, as he looked down into the valley, it appeared to him that a number of dark objects were creeping up the hill. He watched them till he was convinced that they were men.

Slowly and cautiously they came along. He had no longer any doubt that the house was about to be attacked. He hurried down and, going from room to room, warned the defenders to be prepared, while he sent Jack Pemberton to other parts of the building. As he looked out through a loophole on the side which the rebels were approaching, he saw that several carried ladders, and others bundles of firewood, though, for fear of betraying themselves, they had no lighted torches.

"Mr Pemberton," he said to his young aide-de-camp, "tell the people to aim at the fellows with the ladders, and not to trouble themselves about the others—they can do no harm. The moment a man touches a ladder, shoot him down. Say those are my orders—they must be obeyed."

The importance of the advice was soon evident. The insurgents, knowing that they must be discovered, now rushed forward, uttering fierce shrieks and yells. As they did so they lifted up the ladders with the intention of placing them against the walls, their object being evidently to throw the brands on the roof and set it in flames. Without waiting for further orders, the defenders fired, and every man carrying a ladder was shot down. Others took their places, most of whom shared the same fate; but one succeeded in fixing his ladder, a dozen others following fast at his heels, and instantly began to ascend.

Scarcely, however, had the first got half-way up, carrying a torch in his hand, than a shot struck him. He fell headlong among his companions. Another, notwithstanding, made the attempt, followed by a third; but they both met with the same fate, being exposed to the aim of the two best marksmen in the fortress, the rest of the assailants in the mean time firing away, aiming at the loopholes and roof. As few of them had before handled muskets, their bullets flew wide of the mark, while the garrison kept pouring down a continual fire among them. Even more experienced troops might have retired before such a reception.

The blacks showed the most desperate courage, and it was some time before they discovered that their attempt was hopeless. A few of them, indeed, again endeavoured to place

the ladders against the wall, but as all of those who did so were shot, the rest, finding that so many of their companions had fallen, were seized with a panic and began to rush down the hill. The braver fellows among them lifted the slain and wounded, and, in spite of the bullets which flew about their ears, carried them off.

"If all the insurgents behave as these rascals have done it will be no easy task to subdue them," observed Major Malcolm to his host.

Not a single person in the house had been injured, but they could not help acknowledging that the case would have been very different had they met the insurgents in the open field, for it would have been no easy task to drive back a host of savages who displayed the desperate courage their assailants had done, as Major Malcolm was afterwards to find.

No one expected that another attack would be made during the night, but of course a watch was kept as before, though many of the gentlemen threw themselves on the cane sofas and chairs, or went to sleep on the ground overcome with fatigue.

The next morning, when daylight enabled them to discern objects at a distance, not a black could be seen. Jack Pemberton and several other young men, on this, volunteered to go out and ascertain if the rebels had really retreated. They had been gone for some time, and fears began to be entertained that they had been cut off. However, they at length were seen coming up the hill. They gave the satisfactory report that not a black was to be discovered in the neighbourhood. "In what direction have they gone?" asked Major Malcolm. They had not thought of making any observations on the subject. "Then I must beg you and a few of your friends to accompany me that we may ascertain the point," he said. Jack would go with the greatest pleasure.

They set out, and in a short time Major Malcolm expressed his opinion that they had gone northward, in the direction of Bellevue. He returned to the house and begged Mr Pemberton to allow him to take as many volunteers as he could obtain, that he might push his way on to Montego, to gather as large a force as could be collected, in order to attack the rebels without delay. Mr Hayward assured him that it would be hopeless to gain assistance in any other direction, as from certain information he had obtained the whole of the intermediate country was in a state of rebellion. Jack was very eager to go, but this his father would not allow. Six other young men, for



whom horses could be provided, volunteered, and they, with the major's servant and Mr Hayward's follower, made up a party of ten.

After a hurried breakfast they set off, and were seen from the house galloping rapidly to the westward.

The remainder of the day passed off quietly. Not a negro was seen moving about in the neighbourhood of the house, and, except that here and there blackened patches showed that the cane-fields had been visited by the ruthless bands of the insurgents, there were no signs visible of the fearful rebellion raging throughout the country. Mr Pemberton, however, had become very anxious to obtain news from Bellevue, for although Major Malcolm had assured him that the house was well fortified, he was alarmed at hearing that the blacks who had so fiercely assaulted Walton had gone off in that direction. Bellevue, from its position and the character of the house, was less capable of offering an effectual resistance to a determined attack than Walton, and should the rebel slaves have resolved on its destruction, he dreaded lest they might by persevering attacks accomplish their object.

On going to the roof of the house he could see, both to the northward and eastward, dense columns of smoke ascending to the blue sky—too clear evidence that the insurgents had possession of the country, and were burning the plantations and residences of the settlers. Several of his guests thus witnessed the destruction of their homes and property, while they gave vent to their bitter feelings by uttering threats of vengeance, though they had ample cause to be thankful that they had escaped with their lives.

Proposals were made by the more daring to sally forth and disperse the rebels, but the greater number thought it wiser to remain in a place of safety. Mr Pemberton himself was unwilling to leave the house without defenders, lest some fresh bands, discovering that it was unguarded, might visit it during his absence.

No news had come from Bellevue, and at length his son Jack and three other men volunteered to make their way very cautiously in that direction and ascertain the state of affairs. If the rebel slaves were attacking the house, or were in the neighbourhood, so that they could not approach it without the risk of being cut off, they were to return; but if not, they had leave to go on and visit their friends, and report that all had gone well at Walton.

"Remember, my lads, you are to be cautious and not expose yourselves to the risk of losing your lives by getting between the savages and the road by which you can retreat to this house. Discretion, in this case, is the better part of valour. By the time you return we may perhaps have obtained further assistance, and we will then, if Bellevue is really besieged, do our best to go to the relief of our friends. The slaves are, I suspect, especially bent on revenging themselves on Thompson, the overseer, who is looked upon by them as a hard man and a severe taskmaster, though our friend Twigg thinks well of him, and is satisfied with his management of the estate. A slave who has become one of their leaders—Cudjoe, I am told by our people, is his name—was flogged some time back by Thompson, and the savage has ever since threatened to revenge himself on the overseer. This makes me fear that they will persevere longer than under other circumstances they might have done, but if our friends at Bellevue can hold out it will be an advantage, by occupying the slaves who would otherwise have been roaming through the country and devastating other estates. You may, Jack, if you have an opportunity, warn Thompson to beware of Cudjoe when the rest of the slaves have been again brought under subjection, for the savage is not likely to forego his desire of vengeance, even should the overseer escape at this time."

These remarks were made while Jack was preparing for his expedition. He promised strictly to obey his father's directions.

He and his friends, well armed, forthwith set out. They were all spirited young men, who had been educated in England, but had been long enough in the country to be well acquainted with its ways, and had also been accustomed to field sports. They were thus admirably suited for the task they had undertaken. Well aware of the danger they were running, they advanced cautiously, keeping as much as possible under cover of the hedges and trees, and looking out well ahead that they might not suddenly come upon the enemy. They had wisely agreed to keep shoulder to shoulder, or back to back, as the case might be, should they be attacked, and being stout-hearted and confident in the use of their weapons, they had little doubt that they should be able to beat back any number of assailants.

The sun struck down with tremendous force in the open places they had to pass, but they were lightly clad, with thick straw hats on their heads, and none of them cared much for the heat. When passing across the open country they pushed on rapidly, but moved forward more leisurely in the shade. As they avoided

the villages, they met no one. The whole country indeed had, it seemed, suddenly become a desert. They wished to avoid falling in with any slaves who might give notice to the rebels of their whereabouts, and also had resolved not to rely on any reports they might hear, but to trust only to their own observations.

It took them nearly two hours, from the circuitous route they followed, to reach the neighbourhood of Bellevue. They now proceeded more cautiously. All seemed quiet. No shots were heard, and they began to hope that they should reach their friends without difficulty.

"We must not trust to appearances, however," observed Jack. "The rebels may possibly be investing the house, and, judging from our own experience, they may yet not venture to attack it in the daytime. You lie down under these bushes while I creep forward, as from the top of this rise I shall get a sight of Bellevue, and be able to ascertain more accurately the state of affairs."

Saying this, while his companions followed his advice, Jack made his way to the top of the hill, bending low, that should any of the enemy be posted in the intermediate valley, he might run less risk of being seen. At length the house came in view. All seemed quiet around it, but he was still not perfectly satisfied. He advanced a little further towards a bush, through the branches of which he could see into the valley without exposing himself. As he bent aside the boughs with the barrel of his musket to look through them more easily, he caught sight of a number of black heads moving here and there some five or six hundred yards below him. There could be no doubt that they were rebels, and that they were, after their fashion, laying siege to the house.

Presently he saw a party issue from the stockades, and he thought even at that distance he could recognise Archie Sandys. The leaders were white men, and were followed by several blacks with buckets on their heads. He at once divined their object. For some time, apparently, they were not discovered by the rebels, but presently one of the latter, doing duty as a sentinel in advance of the rest, saw what was taking place. He giving notice to the others, a number of them started forth, and, dashing up the hill, began firing away at the white men. Jack witnessed the gallant way in which Archie defended his followers, and had the satisfaction of seeing them regain their fortifications without any of them apparently being wounded.

While this scene was being enacted, as the rebels' eyes were turned toward the house, he was able, without much risk, to creep forward and get a more complete view of their position.

"We should not have the slightest chance of getting in, that's very certain," he said to himself; "but if we remain here, we shall run a great risk of being caught." And, not without some fear that he might be seen by the blacks, who now covered the opposite hill, he hurried back to his friends.

They agreed with him that the sooner they were off the better, but that if they could collect a sufficient force of white men and trustworthy mulattoes, they might without difficulty cut their way through the undisciplined band of savages, with some prospect also of putting them to flight.

"In my opinion, if they are attacked in a determined way, they will very quickly take to their heels," said Jack.

Their return occupied a shorter time than they had before taken, for, as they cared less for being seen, they were able to follow the highroad. On their way, about a mile distant from Walton, they passed through a village which appeared to be entirely deserted. Looking into one of the huts, however, they saw a boy of about twelve years old sitting on the ground, crying and looking very miserable.

"What is the matter?" asked Jack, who recognised him as the son of one of the Walton slaves.

"Me out in de fields, and when come back find fader gone, me not know where, but s'pose rebels take him away to kill him, for dey kill ebrybody else who not get off and hide," answered the boy, who was evidently an unusually intelligent little fellow.

"Well, Quashie," said Jack, who was kind-hearted as well as brave, "you had better come along with us, and we will take care of you till father comes back—as I hope he will. Where is your mother?"

"Mother lib wid Massa Twigg—she call Martha," he answered.

"Oh, then I know her. She nurses the children. All right, Quashie. Cheer up; you shall have something to eat as soon as we get back," said Jack.

Quashie started up, and accompanied the young gentleman without further questioning.

Glad as Mr Pemberton was to get his son and young friends back again, he was made very anxious on hearing of the state of affairs at Bellevue.

"The rebels are evidently bent on taking the place, and from the desperate character I hear of Cudjoe, I fear that he will not give up the enterprise as long as he has a hope of success," said Mr Pemberton.

The matter was talked over by himself and the other planters. Before any desperate enterprise was undertaken to afford relief to their friends, it was important to ascertain how much they required it.

"I will try what can be done by means of Quashie, the boy Jack just now brought in," said Mr Pemberton. "He would make his way where a man would fail; and as his mother is a slave of the Twiggs, he can, I should think, be trusted, for I will let him understand she will be benefited as well as her master and mistress."

"A good idea, perhaps. Not that I fancy these slaves have any natural affection," observed one of the party.

"I do not agree with you there, my friend," observed Mr Pemberton. "Both fathers and mothers are very fond of their children in their way; and I will answer for it that Quashie will manage to carry any message we may send, and bring back an answer safely."

Quashie being called, he without hesitation undertook to do what was required of him. He begged only that he might take his own time and mode of proceeding, and grinned when some one remarked that he might be caught by the rebels.

"Me git in and me come back, neber fear," he answered.

The only question was how to send a note. Mrs Pemberton proposed writing what was necessary, and, the paper being rolled up tightly and covered with black stuff, to conceal it among his thick crop of woolly hair. "Were he caught, the rebels might search him thoroughly and not discover it in the way that I will manage," she said.

Quashie was perfectly content with the proposal, and was evidently proud of the confidence placed in him. He confessed that he had heard of the intended outbreak, and had given his

mother the information which she had sent to her master and mistress.

Quashie, having had a good supper, declared that he should be ready to set out that night if required; but as it was hoped that during the next day a plan might be organised more effectually to help their friends than could be then done, it was agreed that it would be better to wait till the following evening. From Jack's report they were at present, at all events, in no distress, and were likely to hold out against any attack.

Another night went by, and the next morning Jack and his companions expressed their wish to set off again to ascertain how their friends at Bellevue were getting on; but Mr Pemberton would not allow them to go. The risk, he said, was far too great for the advantage to be obtained. They could render no assistance, and would run a great chance of falling into the hands of the rebels and being put to death. In the course of the day, he hoped that Major Malcolm, with some troops, or at all events a body of militia, would appear, and that their first task would be to attack the rebels besieging Bellevue and relieve their friends. In that case, it would not be safe to leave Walton without a garrison, as the fugitives, if they found it unguarded as they made their way to the mountains, would to a certainty in revenge destroy it. "We must wait patiently till the evening, and then Quashie shall go and bring us word what they are about," he added. He spoke with more confidence perhaps than he felt, yet on one point he had made up his mind, that he would not allow his son to run the risk of losing his life.

The day drew drearily on. The feelings of the ruined inmates of the mansion can better be imagined than described. Their friends slaughtered, their crops and houses destroyed, and their slaves (the most valuable part of their possessions) in revolt, and, if not killed, possibly never again to be reclaimed—what the future had in store for them no one could say. The more confident asserted that the rebellion would quickly be quelled, but others thought that the slaves, joined by the maroons and other free coloured and black people, might overrun the country, and compel all the whites who might escape slaughter to quit it for ever.

Mr Pemberton laughed at such a notion. "Depend on it, as soon as the troops and militia can be collected, the slaves will fly from them as chaff before the wind, or will, if they resist, to a man be cut to pieces," he observed. "It will be a bad look-out for us, I confess, for we shall become bankrupt; but our estates will remain, and we must procure fresh labourers from other

countries, Irish or Germans, who would stand the climate almost as well as blacks, and do twice as much work."

Though the worthy planter talked and went about trying to keep up the spirits of others, he felt his own sinking when darkness came on, and no troops appeared.

Quashie was sent for, and Mrs Pemberton secured the note, done up, as proposed, in his woolly head. She had written it at her husband's dictation, in a small, delicate hand, so that it occupied little more space than a quill.

It mentioned Major Malcolm's arrival, the attack and defence of the house, the flight of the rebels, the fact that the major had gone to collect troops who might be expected every hour, Jack's visit to the neighbourhood of Bellevue, and his having witnessed Archie's expedition to obtain water. "We conclude," it continued, "that you are well able to hold out; but if not, send us word, and, should the military fail to arrive, we will make an expedition to your relief, and will advise you to sally forth and cut your way through the savages. They will not for a moment stand our united attack, and there will be but little or no danger in the undertaking. We cannot leave Walton unprotected, but we can muster twenty well-armed men. Be prepared, and directly you see our signal—a flag flying on the top of the hill—dash out of the house, with the women and children in your centre. Should the rebels threaten to attack you, we will charge down upon them; if not, we will be ready to protect your retreat, and keep the savages at bay till you have got to a safe distance. I propose this in the possibility of your not having a sufficient store of provisions, or being unable to obtain water to stand a long siege. We have an ample supply of food for several weeks. Our love to Fanny. We were much pleased with Major Malcolm, who appears to be greatly struck by her."

Quashie evidently felt the importance of the message confided to him, and was proportionately proud.

"Neber fear, massa, I git into de house and out again, and no one see me," he said, strutting about after the note had been concealed in the top of his woolly pate. "Look here, massa, you no see it now, or neber anybody else till moder get it."

"Well, then, away you go, my boy, and a dollar shall be yours when you come back," said Mr Pemberton.

"Ki! dat's good," exclaimed Quashie, eager to be off.

The planter took him down to a back-door, by which he let him out that he might creep away, lest any prowling foe might be watching the house; not that there was much risk of that, or Jack and his friends would not have performed their expedition so securely.

Quashie ran on along the well-accustomed road till he got near his own village, when, taking off the few clothes he wore, he did them up in a bundle and stowed them away in the hollow of a tree to be ready for his return, leaving only a piece of black stuff round his waist, with which Mrs Pemberton had supplied him at his request. The sharpest of eyes only could have detected Quashie as he crept along under the hedges: he felt confident there was very little risk of his being discovered. Few of his age could outstrip Quashie, and making good use of his legs, he got over the ground in a third of the time Jack Pemberton had taken to accomplish the distance. He now moved more cautiously, stopping to listen every now and then for the sound of voices which might warn him of the whereabouts of the rebels.

At first he began to fancy that they must have decamped. Creeping down the hill, he suddenly found himself close to a group of men lying stretched on the ground fast asleep, while as he peered over a bush he observed others in the same position. He stole silently back, making his way to the left at a cautious distance from the besieging force, if they could be dignified by such a title. Presently, again he drew near, looking out for some opening in their line through which he might make his way, but they appeared to have extended themselves so as completely to encircle the house. Again and again he got up close to the line; still he was not to be daunted. He had undertaken to get through them, and he intended by some means or other to do so. Suddenly he heard a shot, followed by several others. The blacks close to him started to their feet, and hurried off in the direction from whence the shot came.

Now was his opportunity. He darted forward down the hill, springing up the opposite declivity like a hunted hare, at the same time keeping his body almost bent to the ground; and before he was perceived, he was close to the *chevaux-de-frise*. In vain, however, he endeavoured to find his way through it. The garrison were too much occupied with what was going forward on the other side of the house to observe him; indeed, his small, black, lithe body could scarcely have been perceived. He ran on like a mouse, looking for a hole through which to escape, and considering whether he should not cry out for



assistance and ask to be taken in. At last he got to an opening, and in he darted, just as two men rushed up from the lower ground, no one in the darkness perceiving him. As soon as the men were in the inside, several persons filled up the gap, and he made his way undiscovered within the palisades and through the door of the house.

The first person he met was Martha, who had come out to learn what was going forward. Their delight was mutual. Tears streamed from the eyes of his mother as she pressed him to her heart. The planter who had lately expressed an opposite opinion would have acknowledged that the slaves, degraded as they were, were capable of human affection.

His errand was soon told, and Martha, proud of his performance, took him to her master, who was naturally very much surprised at seeing him.

"I bring message from Massa Pemberton," he said.

"Where is it?" asked Mr Twigg.

"Here, massa," answered Quashie, presenting his woolly pate. "You take it out, please."

Martha, however, performed the operation; and the note being eagerly read, a consultation was held on its contents, which considerably raised the spirits of the besieged party, lowered as they had been by the loss of Archie Sandys.

None of them, however, were disposed to attempt cutting their way through the rebels. Lieutenant Belt was almost disabled—for though, in spite of much suffering, he still continued the command in the fortress, he could not use his sword—while the gallant young Scotchman was lost to them. Mr Ferris was willing to make the attempt if others wished it, but he feared the risk to which the ladies would be exposed; and it was finally determined to hold out till the arrival of the troops.

"The small quantity of yams we have secured will not last us long," observed Mr Twigg, "and we must remember that we are threatened with starvation, as well as with another attack from the savages."

"We have food sufficient for another day," remarked Lieutenant Belt; "before the end of that time, relief may be sent to us."

"But should it not come, what then are we to do?" inquired Mr Ferris.

"Act as our friend Pemberton suggests," said Mr Twigg. "Tomorrow evening, as soon as it is dark, we will send off Quashie. We must take care in the mean time that the rebels do not see him, or they will know that by some means or other he got in, and will be on the watch for him. We may depend on Pemberton's carrying out his plan, and I should advise that the attempt be made in the night-time."

Quashie was rather disappointed at finding that he was not to set off at once, as he was eager to get his dollar. His mother consoled him by assuring him that he would be allowed to go the following night, and Mr Twigg made him perfectly happy by at once giving him a dollar, so that he would become the possessor of two dollars, should he accomplish his return journey.

The garrison were not allowed to rest in quiet. The blacks, growing impatient, made several attempts to surprise them, but, in consequence of the severe punishment they had received, were more wary than at first. Each time, on finding that they were discovered, they retreated so rapidly that few, if any, of them were shot.

Morning at length arrived; the blacks had retreated to their cover, and, except that a few shots were at times wantonly fired from a distance at the house, the day went on as the previous ones had done. Much as they wanted food, it would be evidently a dangerous undertaking to attempt procuring it from the yam ground.

The arrival of Major Malcolm was eagerly looked for, but in vain, and it was resolved to send Quashie off at dark, with an account of their now truly desperate condition. He was confident of being able as before to get through the enemy's lines.

In accordance with Mr Pemberton's suggestion, it was resolved in the mean time to get up a flagstaff at the top of the house, with a flag hoisted half-mast high as a signal of their distressed condition. This would hasten the arrival of friends to their relief, should any be in the neighbourhood. It would not, however, prevent the necessity of sending off Quashie to urge that aid might at once be despatched. Fortunately a long pole, which Mr Twigg had intended to put up for that purpose on a neighbouring height, had been brought to the house to be prepared by the carpenter. It was at once carried indoors, and,

the lower end being fixed in a beam of the ceiling of the upper story, was run through the trap which led to the roof. Here, under the direction of Mr Ferris, who had some nautical knowledge, it was stayed up by ropes to the corners of the house, halliards having previously been rove through the sheave at its summit. The difficulty was to obtain a flag. None was to be found, till Mrs Twigg remarked that she and the young ladies had some light dresses which would answer the purpose.

"Let us have them at once, then," exclaimed Mr Twigg eagerly; "there is no time to be lost."

Ellen and Fanny, hurrying to their room, quickly returned with a couple of cambric dresses, such as are generally worn in that warm climate. Before they had time to take their scissors and cut them open as they had intended, Mr Twigg seized them, and hurried with them up to the roof, where Mr Ferris was superintending the erection of the flagstaff.

"Here they are," exclaimed Mr Twigg. "Run them up at once; they will tell our tale better than any more perfect flag."

Mr Ferris, with a ball of rope yarn in his hand, fastened the dresses forthwith to the halliards by the skirts, allowing the full sleeves to blow out.

"There!" he exclaimed, with a touch of his native wit. "Faith, they will show that there are ladies in distress, and if there is any gallantry in the heart of the islanders, we shall soon have them running a race to our assistance."

The dresses thus hoisted flew out to a brisk breeze which blew from the eastward. Just then several shots were heard, and two or three bullets fell on the roof, which, though spent, warned those on it that should the marksmen approach somewhat nearer their position would become dangerous. Mr Ferris, therefore, calling his assistants down, they all quickly got under shelter.

Notwithstanding the signal flying from the roof, the day passed without any one coming to their relief. Their provisions were almost exhausted, and affairs were becoming serious. Another consultation was held, when it was determined to beg Mr Pemberton to come as he proposed, the garrison undertaking to attempt cutting their way through the rebels, and abandoning the house to destruction. A note to that effect was accordingly written, and secured, as the former one had been, in Quashie's

woolly head. About an hour after sundown he crept out at the back of the house, and the instant after was lost to sight. Even his mother felt no fear for his safety, and every one believed that he would make his way without difficulty back to Walton.

After he had gone the enemy recommenced their system of annoyance, coming up under cover and firing at the house. Though the garrison aimed in return at the points from which the flashes of the rebels' muskets were seen, the latter so rapidly retreated that it was supposed none of them were hit. Nothing could be more trying. Sometimes for several minutes together they would remain quiet, when suddenly a shower of shot would come pattering against the walls. The enemy would then again retreat, and single shots would be fired, now from one point, now from another; then again another shower would come, as if the enemy had made a general advance.

"Let them fire away as much as they like," observed Lieutenant Belt, laughing. "I only wish they would fire much oftener at so safe a distance, as they must thus at last expend their powder."

Still those unaccustomed to warfare could not fail to experience uncomfortable sensations as the bullets in rapid succession struck the walls, although as yet they had done but little damage, five of the people only, besides Lieutenant Belt, having been slightly wounded in their shoulders or faces. At length the rebels appeared to have grown tired of that style of amusement, and perfect silence reigned around the house.

Towards morning, when most of the little garrison were lying down, worn out with constant alarms and watching, the cry was raised that the blacks were again coming on; and they were seen rushing up the hill, carrying not only faggots but ladders, evidently intending to attack the house as they had done at Walton, and to set both it and the stockades on fire. Should they succeed, nothing could save the lives of the inmates.

The shrieks and yells uttered by the blacks for the purpose of intimidating the garrison were certainly terrific, and even the gallant lieutenant began to fear that all the efforts made to resist them would be in vain. On inquiry, too, he found that the ammunition was running short, a large proportion having been expended during that and the previous night. Still undaunted, he went round among the people, inspiring others with his own cool courage.

"We have more serious work than hitherto, my friends," he said; "but if we are true to ourselves, we shall beat the enemy

as before. Never mind though they burn the *chevaux-de-frise*, they will not venture through the flames, depend on that; and if we fail to put out the fire, we must retreat into the house. As I told you before, do not throw a shot away. Here they come."

As he spoke, the savages carrying the faggots rushed forward with the intention of casting them over the outer line against the stockades. Many, however, were shot down before they succeeded in doing this; others were killed or wounded after they had thrown forward their loads. A number of men now advanced, carrying candlewood torches.

"Those fellows must be picked off," shouted the lieutenant.

In some cases the command was obeyed; but many of the blacks, now leaping on one side, now on the other, eluded the bullets aimed at them, and threw the burning brands amid the bundles of wood, which catching fire began to blaze up in all directions, the smoke almost concealing the combatants from each other. Whenever it lifted, however, the flames exposed the shrieking mass of blacks clearly to view, and many were shot down in the moment, as they supposed, of their triumphant success.

As Lieutenant Belt had expected, none of them ventured through the burning mass; but here and there the stockades were catching fire, and it appeared too probable that they would be burnt through and afford an ultimate ingress to the foe. The scene was indeed terrible to those standing in the narrow space within the stockades—the crackling of the burning wood, the lurid flames, the dense mass of smoke, and outside the shouting, shrieking savages eager to break through the defences and massacre all within.

Efforts were made to extinguish the fire, and had there been an ample supply of water, it might easily have been done, for it was only in spots where the flames blew against the woodwork that they produced any effect. Still the back and sides of the house were protected, and until the stockades were destroyed the besiegers could make no use of their ladders.

"I do not think we need fear them," said Lieutenant Belt. "We must watch narrowly where they are placed, and shoot down the people from the windows immediately they attempt to mount."

The blacks, as before, carried off their dead and wounded, and it was difficult to ascertain how much they had suffered. Already

a good many had retreated, but others were seen coming up with more faggots, which they attempted to throw amid the already burning mass. By this time the whole house was surrounded by a hedge of flames, and Mr Twigg, who had exerted himself as much as any one, made his way up to the lieutenant, and advised that they should retreat into the house while the enemy were unable to follow them.

"Let us make another attempt to drive them off," was the answer. "They are afraid themselves of the flames they have kindled, and will not venture through them. Now, my lads, give them one more volley," he shouted, "and if I mistake not they will turn tail."

As he shouted "Fire!" at the top of his voice, the order was heard by the blacks, and away they went scampering down the hill, hoping to avoid the bullets which they expected would follow.

The greater number got under cover, or escaped by falling flat on their faces. Ignorant savages as they were, they were unable to take advantage of the success their bravery and hardihood had accomplished. On this the ultimate safety of the hard-pressed garrison depended. Had they pressed on through the opening which the fire had produced, they might have forced their way, not only within the stockade, but into the house itself. Hopes were entertained that the enemy had had fighting enough for the night, and intended to allow the fire to do its work before making another assault. Fresh efforts were made by the garrison to extinguish the fire, which had got hold of the stockades. They had been composed chiefly of dry timber, which easily ignited and burned furiously. At length the lieutenant saw that all attempts to save them would be futile, and that the utmost that could be done would be to prevent the doors and windows of the house itself from catching fire. This, by constant watchfulness and great exertion, was done; and he then, complying with Mr Twigg's earnest appeals, summoned the people to come within the house, when the door was barricaded, and they prepared to hold out, in what they had from the first called their citadel, till the moment for the intended sortie had arrived.

It was a night of terror to many and anxiety to all. Their ammunition was running terribly short; but a few rounds only remained, and there was barely food sufficient to afford a breakfast for the weary garrison. The water also was almost exhausted.

Daylight came, and the lieutenant went himself to the roof of the house to look out, but could see no friendly band coming to their relief. The young ladies' dresses were flying in the morning breeze, sadly rent by the bullets which had passed through them. The lieutenant then turned his glance into the valley, where he saw the black besiegers still apparently as numerous as ever. The hedge of fire had now burned itself out; large gaps existed in the stockades, but portions still remained standing, and would afford some protection to his men in case a sortie had to be made. His chief object was to examine the ground which they would have to traverse, should Mr Pemberton carry out his intention of coming to their relief. He at last descended, and went round to each of the windows, where he had posted a sentry to keep a look-out on the movements of the rebels; then, feeling that he had done his duty, he threw himself down on a cane sofa, to snatch for a short time the rest he so much required.

The other inmates of the house, who had been kept awake all the night, were dozing in their chairs or on their sofas; the men not on guard were lying down on the ground; the children were in their cribs, watched over by Martha. She had reserved some food for them, and they were in that respect better off than any one else. The young ladies and Mrs Twigg had positively refused to take more than their share. They were happily also forgetting their troubles in sleep.

Weary as he was, Mr Ferris felt the dangerous position in which they were placed too much to rest, and continued going from room to room, looking out at each window, and occasionally mounting to the roof. He was standing there, when he saw a single black advancing up the hill from among the savages. He was unarmed, and carried in his hand a pole with a large white flag waving from it. He evidently understood the use of a flag of truce, and trusted to its being respected. He advanced till he got within hearing distance of the house. He was a tall, strongly built man, his features unusually hideous even for a negro. On seeing Mr Ferris, he shouted at the top of his voice, "Will you gib in? You see what we can do. We ask you to make friends."

"We shall be ready to do so on condition that you lay down your arms and return to your duty," answered Mr Ferris.

The black laughed loud and hoarsely. "Do you know who I am?" he asked.

"No," answered Mr Ferris.

"Den I tell you—I Cudjoe. Some inside de house know me, and know dat I no fool. Listen den. We go away and leave Massa Twigg—he good man—and all de people alone on one 'dition, dat you gib up the oberseer and let us hab him to do wid him as we like. Dat is our 'dition; 'cept it and you safe. If not—listen, massa—you got one lily-white daughter, and Massa Twigg him got wife and piccaninnies. You lub dem. You see what we do dis night; we soon come again wid more faggots and fire and ladders, and we burn de house ober your heads and kill ebery one. Cudjoe no fool—Cudjoe speak de truth. Listen, massa, what I say—gib up de overseer or die."

"It is useless making such a proposal," answered Mr Ferris; "no one would consent to it. If you have any other terms to offer we will listen to them. We can hold out against all your attempts to take the house. You have already lost a number of your foolish followers, and many more will be killed if you venture again to attack us."

While Mr Ferris was speaking, he heard a person coming up the ladder, and glancing round he saw Thompson the overseer standing by his side, and on the point of lifting a musket, which he had placed on the roof. Before Mr Ferris had time to stop him, he had raised it to his shoulder and was taking aim at the insurgent leader. As he pulled the trigger Mr Ferris struck up the weapon, and the bullet whistled over the black's head.

"Respect a flag of truce, even in the hands of a savage," he exclaimed indignantly. "If we set such an example, what can we expect in return?"

Cudjoe had observed the act. "I tank you, massa," he shouted, "but dat man die before de sun go down;" and, rapidly turning, he bounded down the hill.

Several shots, which went whistling after him, were fired by the men on guard in the lower story.

"You have done an ill service to the country, sir, and worse to all within this house," exclaimed the overseer. "That man is the mainspring of the rebellion. Had I killed him, the blacks in this neighbourhood, without a leader, would have taken to flight, and we should have been safe."

"I did what was right. A flag of truce should ever be held sacred," answered Mr Ferris. "I do not regret refusing his request, but your act has prevented us from making other terms, which might have been done."



"No terms can be kept with savages. It is impossible to trust them," exclaimed the overseer. "However, we must now stand the consequences."

Mr Ferris, who felt his anger rising at what he considered Thompson's insolence, descended from the roof.

The firing had aroused the rest of the party. The lieutenant even, although musket-shots were familiar sounds, started to his feet, believing that the house was about again to be attacked. Mr Ferris explained what had happened, and both the lieutenant and Mr Twigg agreed that he had acted rightly, and blamed the overseer for firing. Lieutenant Belt especially was indignant at his conduct.

"They may or may not venture again to attack us, but if they do, and succeed, we can expect no mercy at their hands," he said.

"We could have expected none, at all events, I believe," observed Mr Twigg.

Some of the garrison, who had a lower sense of honour than Mr Ferris, were not so well satisfied with his decision, and declared that if they had had their will they would have given up the overseer to Cudjoe, though they took care not to utter such an opinion in his hearing.

The position of the garrison was now truly critical. The shots uselessly fired had expended several of the few rounds, now of such inestimable value. The lieutenant, on making inquiries, found that some of the men had only a single charge apiece; none had more than two. Should another attack be made, what hope had they of beating off the foe? He did not conceal the state of affairs from the gentlemen.

"Then our best chance will be to sally out at once and fight our way towards Walton," said Mr Twigg.

"Unless our friends should appear to our relief we should be surrounded and cut to pieces," answered the lieutenant. "When the blacks find that we have no powder, they will attack us with greater confidence. We may still hold out for some hours in the house, and as the enemy are not as yet aware of our want of ammunition, they may possibly not again venture on an assault."

"But if they do?" asked Mr Twigg.

"Then we must reserve each bullet for the most daring among them. If we can shoot their leaders, the rest will probably take to flight."

"But if we fail, and should they force their way in?" asked the planter, whose spirits were sinking as he thought of the fearful danger to which his family were exposed.

"Then, sir, we must endeavour to drive them out again with our cutlasses and bayonets; or, if the worst happens, place ourselves round the ladies and children, and fight to the last," answered the lieutenant in a confident tone. "Though my sword-arm cannot serve me, I can use a pike or bayonet."

Mrs Twigg had heard of what had taken place, and began to suspect their desperate condition. She imparted her apprehensions to Ellen and Fanny, though neither of them showed any signs of fear.

"I wish that I could use a pistol or sword," exclaimed Fanny; "but surely we can do something. We can hurl stones or logs of wood down on the heads of our assailants from the windows or roof."

"I will help you," cried Ellen, inspired by her friend's courage. "Let us get them carried up at once, in case they are wanted. There are paving-stones which can be dug up and broken into fragments, or pieces of the heavy furniture will serve the purpose. We will at once tell Mr Twigg what we are ready to do."

They hurried into the room where the gentlemen were assembled.

"A brave idea," cried Lieutenant Belt, looking at the young heroines with admiration; "but others can do the work you propose. You must not be exposed to the risk of appearing on the roof. The enemy's bullets, as we know from experience, would reach you there. Let me entreat you to remain below. We shall fight with more confidence when we know that you are safe."

Ellen's suggestion, however, was carried out, and men were immediately sent to break up the paving-stones in the back part of the house. The blacks, at all events, were not likely to gain an easy victory. Hopes indeed were entertained that they would not make another attack, but those hopes were doomed to be disappointed.

"Here they come!" cried several men stationed at the windows.

Lieutenant Belt, starting to his feet, saw the whole body of blacks advancing, some in front, others on one side of the house.

"Now, my men, I charge you not to fire a shot till you can pick out the fellows leading them on, or, if you cannot distinguish them from the rest, wait till the ladders are placed against the wall; for see, they have got ladders with them, and faggots too, and they intend, if they cannot succeed by other means, to burn us out. But do not let that alarm you; if you keep up your courage, we shall prevent them."

As he was speaking, the insurgent slaves were drawing nearer and nearer, though advancing slowly, apparently to enable those carrying the ladders and faggots to keep up with the rest. Just then a dense volume of smoke burst forth between the house and the sea to the north-east, flames quickly following, driven by a brisk breeze which had lately sprung up. The blacks, retreating before the fire, had to make a circuit to avoid it. So furious were the flames that they threatened to set the neighbouring plantations on fire. The chief effect was to shroud the view over the sea in that direction from those in the house; another was somewhat to delay the advance of the blacks, who had evidently determined to approach the house with their whole body at once.

The lieutenant having disposed his men to the best advantage, again ascended to the roof to see if any help was coming. He gazed eagerly round to the west and north. He could discover neither the looked-for signal announcing the approach of Mr Pemberton's party, nor any troops or militia. As he was about again to go down the ladder, he discovered the overseer lying on the roof with a musket by his side.

"Why are you not at your post?" he asked.

"I am of more use where I am," answered the overseer. "I intend doing what was left undone just now. Don't interfere with me."

The lieutenant had not time to exchange words with the man; he hastened down that he might be ready to encourage the rest.

Suddenly the savages gave forth one of those fearful yells which they are accustomed to utter as they rush forward to the fight.

As soon as they got within musket range, those in the front line began firing, showing that they evidently had abundance of ammunition.

The lieutenant distinguished a tall black, with a musket in his hand, leading them on. He raised it to his shoulder and fired. At that moment a fearful shriek was heard—it came from the roof—and a heavy body fell from the trap to the floor below. The black flourished his weapon above his head without stopping to reload.

“De oberseer is dead,” cried Martha, who had rushed out of a closet in which the children had been placed for safety, “he is dead, pity he not killed dis morning.”

The event had indeed occurred too late to be of any avail to the garrison. To attempt making a sortie would now have been madness, for, bad marksmen as were the negroes, the whole party might have been shot down even before they could have reached any available shelter.

Cudjoe’s success—for he must have seen the overseer fall by his bullet—encouraged his followers, and now, shrieking, leaping, and brandishing their weapons, they rushed forward. In vain the lieutenant charged his men not to throw a shot away; the greater number in their eagerness fired, forgetting that they had no fresh charges, and when they felt for their cartridges to reload, they found that their ammunition was expended. The enemy thus almost with impunity reached the walls.

Several of the remaining shots were fired at Cudjoe. He seemed to bear a charmed life, or rather the wonderful leaps and bounds he made amid his companions prevented the defenders of the house, none of whom were over good marksmen, from taking a steady aim at him. Like a swarm of ants about to devour some creature of the forest, the blacks surrounded the house, and began to lift the ladders and place them against the walls.

The lieutenant now ordered the party he had told off for that purpose to go up on the roof to force back the ladders, to hurl down the stones, and to defend it to the last.

Desperate, indeed, had now become the condition of the devoted inmates of Bellevue.

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## Chapter Seventeen.

**The Champion sails from Port Royal—In search of enemies—Chases a pirate, which escapes—Returns to the north coast of Jamaica—Norman Foley hears of the insurrection—Finds some murdered whites—Dreadful scene at Fort Maria—The ship proceeds along the coast—A white man seen making a signal from the shore—A boat sent to bring him off—Pursued by blacks—Rescued—Proves to be Archie Sandys—Gives an account of the attack on Bellevue—A conflagration—Signals seen—An expedition under Norman Foley sent on shore—The rebels put to flight—The garrison of Bellevue relieved—Meeting of Norman and Ellen—Major Malcolm and a strong force arrive—The Champion sails—Signs of a coming gale.**

When Gerald wrote the last letter his father and Norah had received, the *Champion* was on the point of sailing from Port Royal harbour, on a cruise between Jamaica and Cuba, with directions to look out for any of the enemy's privateers or smaller vessels of war, or should she come in sight of any squadron of larger ships, to watch their movements, and to return to port with an account of their whereabouts. Captain Olding also received orders to visit the northern coast of the island, and ascertain if the reports which had just arrived of the unquiet state of the slaves had any foundation in truth; but he was not to waste time on the coast, as the former part of his orders was considered of by far the greatest importance. Still his second lieutenant very naturally hoped that he might obtain an opportunity of paying his promised visit to Miss Ferris, and Gerald expected that he might get a run on shore, and perhaps spend a pleasant day with his friends. He had inquired, when at Mr Twigg's office in Kingston, about the *Ouzel Galley*. The anxiety he had naturally felt when he heard of the hurricane had been relieved on his being assured that a search had been made for her along the coast, and that not the slightest trace of her could be discovered. He therefore hoped that the next packet would bring the account of her safe arrival at Waterford, and that he might before long meet Owen again at Kingston.

The *Champion*, after rounding Port Morant, stood to the northward towards Saint Jago de Cuba, and chased several vessels, which got away from her, not perhaps very much to Lieutenant Foley's disappointment. He even ventured, when dining with the commander, to speak of the importance of visiting the northern coast of Jamaica, in case the slaves should

really, as was supposed possible, be contemplating an insurrection. The commander, who did not imagine that such a thing was likely, was, however, bent on looking out for enemies of a size which he might hope to capture. He was heartily joined by Lieutenant Tarwig, who, if he did not care much for honour and glory, was at all events anxious to obtain a good lump of prize-money, with which he might set up housekeeping with Mrs Tarwig, whenever he had persuaded some lovely damsel to share his fortunes. The master and the other officers were very much of his way of thinking.

"A sail on the weather-beam, sir," said Gerald, entering the cabin where the commander, the second lieutenant, the purser, and two midshipmen were his guests at dinner.

"Empty your glasses, gentlemen," said the commander hurriedly, rising and running up the companion-ladder on deck. "What is she like?" he shouted to the look-out on the mast-head.

"A ship, sir, going free, and standing to the eastward," was the answer.

"Make all sail, Mr Tarwig; we shall be up to her before dark, and ascertain what she is. Haul up a couple of points—she can't escape between us and the land."

The breeze was fresh, and the stranger continued on her former course, either not having discovered the corvette or not being desirous of avoiding her. Beyond her was seen the coast of Cuba rising into mountainous elevations, the more distant scarcely to be distinguished from the blue sky.

The corvette having been lately out of dock, and being in good trim, sailed her best. To deceive the enemy, the commander had had some canvas painted black and hung over her sides, triced up a couple of feet or so above the hammock nettings, to give her the appearance of a merchantman, but an observant eye might have detected her by the perfect trim of her sails. This, however, under the present circumstances, could not be avoided.

The stranger, now clearly visible from the deck, was after a time seen to haul to the wind. She was apparently not much smaller than the *Champion*, and probably did not carry fewer guns; it was hoped, therefore, that she would before nightfall heave to and await a contest.

"She is a fast ship whatever she is," observed Mr Tarwig; "but as to her wish to fight us, or whether she is French or Spanish, I have great doubts."

"She has hoisted Spanish colours, at all events," said Mr Foley, who had been looking at her through the telescope, "but she does not shorten sail."

"She is probably making for Cumberland harbour," said the master, who had been looking at the chart, "and if she gets in there it may be a hard matter to persuade her to come out again, unless we send in the boats and cut her out."

For a considerable time neither of the ships altered their course. The stranger, however, going free, was making faster way through the water than the *Champion*, which was close-hauled, and it seemed very likely, should the wind shift more to the eastward, that the former vessel would pass her. The sun was already approaching the horizon, and although the crescent moon could be seen faintly in the sky, it would not long afford its light. The stranger, if inclined to escape, might do so during the hours of darkness. The two ships, however, were now scarcely three miles apart, and rapidly approaching each other. The *Champion* was prepared for action, the crew were at their quarters, and the guns run out. The sea was sufficiently smooth to allow even the lee guns to be fought without difficulty. Mr Billhook had taken the telescope and was narrowly examining the stranger.

"Shiver my timbers, but I believe she is the same buccaneering craft we found alongside the *Ouzel Galley*, when we chased her till she had well-nigh run on those rascally Bahama reefs," he exclaimed, still keeping his eye at the glass. "Yes, there is a square patch on her mizen-topsail to repair a hole which I doubt not an enemy's shot had made, as she was showing her heels in the fashion the picaroons always do, unless they hope to make a prize of some unwary merchantman."

The commander, on hearing this, took the telescope.

"Yes," he said. "If not the same vessel, she is very like her; and should she be so, she will not wait to allow us an opportunity of taking her if she can help it, but will run ahead of us even now, unless the wind shifts a point or two more to the eastward, and then our best chance of catching her will be to tack and stand in for the land."

The wind, however, held and the sun went down, when the stranger, setting flying sails above her royals, stood almost across the *Champion's* bows.

"Try her with our foremost gun," cried the commander to the second lieutenant, who had gone to his station forward.

McTrigger, the gunner, who was on the look-out expecting the order, trained the gun himself, and in the dim light of evening the white splinters were seen flying from the stranger's side. The next instant nine flashes of flame issued forth from her, the shot ricocheting over the calm ocean, three or four passing close to the corvette but failing to strike her.

"The fellow wishes to show us that he can give as good as he can take," said the master. "I wonder, since he has got so many teeth, he ran from us in the fashion he did before."

"Perhaps they were not as well sharpened as they are now," remarked the doctor, chuckling at his own wit.

"If we get alongside we'll either draw them or knock them down his throat," answered Mr Billhook.

"Thank you, kind sir, I owe you one," replied the doctor, who objected to any one making jokes but himself.

All on board, now that her character was discovered, were more eager than ever to come up with the pirate. She was, however, evidently making better way through the water than the *Champion*. Again she fired her starboard guns, though she did not alter her course to do so; while the *Champion* could not fire her larboard foremost guns without keeping away a couple of points or more, and thereby losing ground. It was very provoking to have got within shot of a buccaneer which was reported to have committed so much damage to the trade of the islands, for, though the Spanish colours were still flying at her peak, no one doubted what she was. All the sail the *Champion* could carry was already set, and nothing that could be done would make her go faster. Twice again she fired, but neither shot reached the enemy. The gloom increasing, dimmer and dimmer grew the enemy's wide spread of canvas, although the silvery light of the moon, playing on the starboard leaches of her sails, for some time showed where she floated on the glittering waters. The moon was, however, going down, and as the night advanced the darkness increased till the chase was almost lost to sight. The officers and even most of the watch below remained on deck.



"She has tacked, sir," cried Mr Foley from forward.

"We'll tack too," said the commander. "Hands, about ship; helms alee; raise tacks and sheets; mainsail haul; of all, haul!" The crew eagerly performed the manoeuvre, and the ship, now on her starboard tack, stood in towards the land.

Many sharp eyes on board were directed towards the spot where the stranger had last been seen. The master had gone to consult his chart; it was his business to warn the commander not to stand on too long towards the coast, although it was not as dangerous from hidden reefs and keys as further to the westward.

"Can anybody see her?" asked the commander, whose eyesight was less acute than that of most of his younger officers.

No one answered.

"I got a glimpse of her a minute ago, but I can't make her out anywhere now, sir," said Mr Foley.

At length the ship stood on for a quarter of an hour, till the outline of the land could be seen distinctly ahead against the clear sky. Again she was put about, but nowhere was the chase visible. The *Champion* was now standing along the land at a safe distance. If the buccaneer could not be discovered from her deck, neither could she from that of the buccaneer; she might come upon her unexpectedly. A sharp look-out was kept all night, but when morning returned no sail was in sight. A mist hung like a thick veil along the coast, allowing only the summits of the higher ridges to be seen, as the sun, rising above the horizon, tinged them of a red hue with his glowing rays. To look for her to the eastward was useless, and the ship again being put about, stood to the westward along the land; but, except a few small craft which immediately made their escape among the rocks, or within the numerous bays and creeks, no craft worth overhauling was seen.

The commander was a calm-tempered man, accustomed to disappointment, or he might have joined with some of the younger officers in their expressions of disgust at having lost the picaroon. Lieutenant Foley tried to look unconcerned when the commander at length expressed his intention of standing across to the Jamaica coast, touching at different places to ascertain what was going forward on shore.

As the wind was favourable the *Champion* was not long in making the land. A small bay marked as Peyton's Cove on the chart lay directly abreast of her. The commander, heaving the ship to, sent his second lieutenant with a boat to try and ascertain from any of the people in the neighbourhood what was going forward, that he might direct his course accordingly. A fisherman's hut appeared not far off from where he landed, and the lieutenant made his way towards it. The door was closed, but Mr Foley, on listening, heard a loud snore from within. He knocked.

"Ki! who are you? What you come for?" asked a gruff voice.

"Open the door, my friend, and I will tell you," answered the lieutenant; "but bear a hand, for I am in a hurry."

The door was speedily opened, and a stout, well-fed negro appeared.

"Beg pardon, Massa Osifer," exclaimed the man, who had evidently been taking his midday sleep after the labours of the morning, for he stood blinking his eyes as the bright light shone on them; "what you want?"

"I want to know what is going forward in the country; and if you cannot inform me, pray say where I can find some one who can, for I see no dwelling-houses hereabouts."

"Oh, massa, bad, berry bad. De black slaves great rascals. Dey say dat dey murder all de garrison at Fort Maria, and kill de white buckras eberywhere."

"That is indeed bad news," observed Mr Foley, scarcely believing the man.

"It true news too," answered the fisherman in a positive tone. "If you wish to know, go on along de road up dere, on de top of de hill to de right, and dere you find a house, and de people tell you what happen, if dey alive; but me tink all de people dead by dis time, seeing dat dere troats were cut last night."

"Is such really the case?" exclaimed the lieutenant.

"Iss, massa; dey cut my troat 'cause I free gentleman, but I hide away and pull off in de boat, and so I 'scape."

The black spoke so positively that the lieutenant, not thinking it prudent to venture alone, lest some of the insurgent slaves

might be in the neighbourhood, called up his men and proceeded along the road the fisherman had pointed out, till he reached a house embosomed in trees. The doors were open, but no one came forth. He entered. Marks of blood were on the floor, and an odour of burning pervaded the building. Going along the passage, he found that the fisherman's statement was too true. At the further end of a room lay on the ground the bodies of a white man, a brown young woman, and two children cruelly mangled, while in another room were some extinguished torches, showing that the murderers had intended to set the house on fire, but had suddenly retreated without effecting their purpose. As it was important to return immediately to the ship, he could make no further examination of the building. It had apparently been the residence of a small proprietor. The garden and neighbouring fields, though trampled down, had evidently been carefully cultivated. He hurried back to the beat, passing the fisherman's hut on his way.

"I told you so, massa," said the man quite coolly. "Worse tings happen in other places."

"You did indeed speak the truth," answered the lieutenant, his heart sinking as he thought of the danger to which Ellen and her father might be exposed.

On reaching the ship he informed the commander of the dreadful state of affairs, and recommended that they should stand along the coast and make further inquiries at the towns and forts near the shore. In the last letter he had received from Ellen, she had told him that she was residing at a house some way further to the westward, but its exact position he had been unable to ascertain, and he could not find it marked on the chart.

A fresh and favourable breeze blowing, the ship soon came off Fort Maria, when she hove to, and he—this time having Gerald with him, and accompanied by another boat, of which Crowhurst had the command—pulled on shore. As they approached the fort, the appearance it presented excited their fears that the fisherman's report was likely to prove too true. The flag and staff had vanished, and no sentries were to be seen on the ramparts, while in the centre rose a mass of blackened walls. The guns peering through the embrasures commanded the landing-place, but, as the fort was evidently deserted, the boats pulled in, and the lieutenant and his companions at once leaped on shore. They made their way up a steep path which led to the rear of the fort. The gates were open, and they hurried in. A fearful sight met their gaze. Every

building within had been set on fire and gutted. Amid the mass of charred timber lay numerous bodies, apparently, as far as their dreadful condition enabled the party to judge, of white men—some in the dress of civilians, while the half-destroyed uniforms showed that others had been soldiers. Two, from the broken swords still grasped in their hands, were apparently officers, who had fought their way out of the building, which had been the mess-room of the fort, and had been shot or cut down by the savages. A few bodies of blacks were seen, evidently from their dresses the officers' servants, who had been waiting at table. The general state of the fort told its own story. The whole garrison and several visitors had, not dreaming of danger, been suddenly surprised by an overwhelming body of insurgents, who must have rushed in and massacred them before the soldiers could stand to their arms. If any white people in the neighbourhood had escaped with their lives, they must have gone away and not dared to return to the scene of the catastrophe.

The lieutenant and the midshipmen climbed to the highest part of the fort, and looked round in every direction. Nowhere could they see a human being, but in the distance they observed several blackened spaces where flourishing sugar-canes had lately grown or gardens or other plantations had existed. The fisherman's account was thus fearfully verified. As no one could be seen from whom to gain further information, Mr Foley and his companions re-embarked, and pulled back for the ship as fast as the men could lay their backs to the oars. The commander thought of landing the marines and a party of small-arms men, but, without further information, it would be impossible to know in what direction to proceed.

The boats being hoisted in, the sails were again filled, and the ship stood on to the westward as close to the shore as the master would venture to take her. Every telescope on board was turned towards it, no one looking out more eagerly than Norman Foley, who dreaded lest they should come in sight of a once pleasant mansion now reduced to a mass of ruins. If a well-garrisoned fort had been surprised and thus fearfully destroyed, what might not have happened in the event of a single planter's house with small means of defence being attacked. He very naturally conjured up all sorts of dreadful pictures; at the same time, he manfully tried to combat his apprehensions, and to hope for the best.

"I see some one on the shore, sir, making a signal," cried Gerald, who had a telescope to his eye. "He appears to me to

be a white man. He is running up and down, seemingly trying to attract our attention. There he is now, under that tall cocoa-nut tree."

All the telescopes in use were turned in the same direction.

"Yes, that is a white man, no doubt about it," said the commander. "He has taken off his shirt and is waving it. Heave the ship to, Mr Tarwig. Call the gig's crew away, Mr Foley, and pull in to ascertain what he wants. There can be little doubt that it is a matter of importance. Come off again as soon as possible, for we shall probably find places further along the coast, where the white people are hard-pressed by the blacks."

The commander's orders were speedily obeyed, and Norman Foley, without the loss of a moment, followed by Gerald who was directed to accompany him, lowered himself into the gig. He was eager to be off. Every moment of time was precious; he had vividly realised the truth of the commander's last remark.

"Give way, lads, give way!" he exclaimed, imparting his eagerness to the boat's crew.

They bent lustily to their oars, and the boat shot rapidly over the blue waters towards the sandy beach, where the white man had been seen. It was yet impossible to discern him, however, without a glass. Mr Foley kept his eyes fixed on the spot, hoping that he would soon again come in sight.

"I see him, sir," cried Gerald; "he is still waving his shirt, and seems in a desperate hurry. Perhaps he is some one who has escaped from the blacks, and he wants us to go and help some white people attacked by them."

"Very probably," answered Norman Foley, with a scarcely suppressed groan.

The boat was nearing the shore.

"He is now making for the west side of the bay, towards a reef of rocks which runs out some way into the sea," exclaimed Gerald. "He expects that he shall reach us sooner."

"I see him," said Mr Foley; but directly afterwards Gerald exclaimed—

"He has disappeared."

"He has had, probably, to go to the inner end of the rock to climb up it," observe the lieutenant. "I thought so," he added; "we'll pull in and look out for a place where we can take him on board."

"He has good reason to be in a hurry," exclaimed Gerald. "See, there on the top of the hill are a whole host of black fellows, and now they are running down towards the sand. I suspect that they are in chase of him, and if he does not make haste they will catch him, too."

While Gerald was speaking, a number of negroes, armed with spears headed with long blades used for cutting the canes, and with axes and other rudely formed weapons, were seen scampering down the hill. They possessed apparently no firearms, however, or the fugitive's chance of escape would have been very small. He made his way along the rough rocks, leaping across the fractures in his course, and often passing spots on which he would scarcely have ventured had not a foe been at his heels. The blacks in their eagerness to catch him scarcely took notice of the boat, though had they done so they might have suspected that her crew possessed firearms, with which they could be reached. They were scarcely more than a hundred yards off, when the boat got up to the ledge of rock, and the white man, springing forward, aided by the bowman, leaped on board and was passed along by the crew to the stern-sheets.

The lieutenant immediately ordered the boat to be backed off, and her head being turned in the direction of the ship, the crew once more gave way. The blacks, meantime, finding that their expected victim had escaped, gave vent to their feelings of anger in shouts and cries. A few also, who had been in the rear, now appearing armed with muskets, had the audacity to fire at the boat, but happily the bullets fell short of her, and she was soon entirely beyond their range.

"Where do you come from? What has happened?" asked the lieutenant, as the stranger sank down by his side.

"I was hiding from the rebel slaves in the wood up in the hill, when I saw the ship out there, and came down in the hopes that the commander would land some of his crew and send them to the assistance of a white family, friends of mine, whose house is surrounded by savages who are threatening their destruction," answered the latter. "There is no time to be lost, for they were fearfully beset, and have neither food nor water

remaining, while nearly all their ammunition is, I fear, expended."

"Who are they?" asked Norman Foley, in an evident tone of agitation.

"A Mr Twigg and his family, with whom Mr Ferris, an Irish gentleman, and his daughter are staying. There are several other white people in the house," was the answer.

"Mr and Miss Ferris in danger!" ejaculated the lieutenant and Gerald in the same breath. "How far off is the house? Can we soon reach it?" inquired the former.

"Twelve or fourteen miles to the westward from here," answered the stranger. "I should think with this breeze you might get off it in less than a couple of hours."

"We'll lose no time, and the commander will, I am sure, afford every assistance in his power," said Norman Foley. "Mr and Miss Ferris are friends of mine, and I will use every exertion to go to their assistance. But how do you know that they are so hard-pressed?" he added, anxiously. "Have you made your escape from the house?"

"I did not do so intentionally. Having set out with a number of others to obtain some yams, we were attacked by a party of blacks, and I was made prisoner. Happily I had done some service to two or three slaves among the party, and had saved them more than once from a flogging. While some of the others proposed putting me to death, they dragged me off among them, and before the rest of the gang knew what had happened, it being at night, they enabled me to get off. I made my way along the shore, as I knew that part of the country and recollected places where I could conceal myself. I felt pretty sure, however, that should the black leader or any other instigators of the rebellion discover that I had escaped they would send in pursuit of me. I could not move fast in the darkness, and had got to no great distance when daylight broke, so I climbed up into a big cotton-tree and hid myself among the mass of creepers to rest. I had intended trying to reach a fort where I could obtain assistance, but on looking out of my hiding-place in the morning I saw a party of blacks, who were apparently searching for me. I therefore crouched down among the creepers, where, as I was pretty well worn out, I fell asleep. At night I again pushed on, hoping that the blacks had given up the pursuit. I had reached the hill below which you saw me, when another day broke, and I had once more to hide

myself for fear of being discovered. On looking out next morning I saw your ship approaching, and though I thought it probable that the blacks might still be looking for me, I hurried down in the hope that you would see me and would go to the assistance of my friends. But two days have passed since I left them, and I know not what may have happened in the meantime."

Norman Foley's anxiety was greatly increased by the account given him by Archie Sandys, for he it was who had so happily escaped destruction. He observed the lieutenant's evident agitation, though he might not have suspected the cause. Gerald plied him with questions, and drew forth many particulars of the siege and defence of Bellevue.

On reaching the ship Norman Foley introduced Archie Sandys to the commander, who, learning from him the state of affairs at Bellevue, ordered the sails to be filled, and the *Champion* under every stitch of canvas she could carry stood along the coast. As she approached that part where, by Archie's account, Bellevue was situated, a look-out was kept for a fitting landing-place for the boats. They had all been got ready for lowering. The marines, under their sergeant, and a party of blue jackets armed with muskets, pistols, and cutlasses, were ordered to be prepared to go in them with Mr Foley, Crowhurst, Mr Dobbs the boatswain, and Gerald; Archie Sandys was of course to accompany the expedition as a guide. On nearing the spot dense volumes of smoke were seen rolling along, driven by the wind, concealing the landscape from view.

Poor Norman was almost ready to give way to despair. His worst apprehensions were fulfilled. The savage blacks must have set the house on fire, and too probably its hapless inmates were destroyed. Many others on board thought as he did.

Gerald, who was looking out, however, suddenly exclaimed, "I see the top of the house above the smoke; the fire does not reach it. There is a flagstaff with two flags flying from it, though they are odd-looking ones."

"It is my belief that they are petticoats, or some female gear," exclaimed the master. "Yes, no doubt about it; the signal is pretty clear, it means females in distress. We'll soon help you, my pretty maidens, whoever you are."

Mr Foley had taken the glass. After carefully surveying the spot he began to breathe more freely. Yes, it was a wood on fire, some way below the house, and that might still be holding out.



The flags, too, he discovered, were light muslin dresses, and he very likely suspected even then that one belonged to Ellen. It did not require that, however, to make him spring forward with even greater eagerness than he had more than once displayed when setting forth on a cutting-out expedition. He took the lead, the launch and pinnace following. He allowed his crew to dash on ahead of the other boats, for as they approached the shore rapid firing was heard. Even now the house was being attacked, and Archie had mentioned the scarcity of ammunition. Should there be any delay they might be too late to save its inmates. The thick smoke had concealed their approach, as it had the ship, from the view of the blacks as also from those in the house. The former, indeed, not expecting to be interfered with from the side of the sea, had not turned their eyes in that direction.

Norman had time to land, and with the assistance of Archie, who pointed out the different localities to form his plan of proceeding. It was to move to the right just outside the burning wood, then to charge up the hill under cover of the smoke and attack the enemy on the flank, so that their shot might not be directed towards the house. The other boats appeared to him to be pulling very slowly, but they arrived at last, and a small party of marines quickly formed with the blue jackets on either hand. The orders were given in a low voice, Norman and Archie leading in Indian file, and at a double quick march. They proceeded a short way along the shore, and then facing about they rushed up the hill, uttering a true English cheer. The blacks raised a cry of alarm. Those who with burning brands in their hands were attempting to mount the ladders let them drop, tumbling head over heels to the ground. Their companions scampered off, many throwing down their muskets. Their leader Cudjoe held his, and sullenly retired, but as several shots came whizzing past him, he increased his pace, till he began to run as fast as the rest, and the whole multitude took to their heels, shrieking with alarm, like a herd of swine, tumbling over each other down the hill, some making for the opposite height, others rushing along the valley.

The marines, led by their sergeant, charged after them till the greater number of the fleet-footed savages had disappeared.

Archie Sandys accompanied the master with one party of blue jackets in pursuit of Cudjoe, but the black leader succeeded in reaching a wood, and was soon lost to sight among the trees. Several negroes, however, were overtaken. Seeing that they could not escape, they fell on their knees, begging for mercy.

The seamen were about to cut them down when Archie recognised two or three slaves who had saved his life, and throwing himself before them intreated the seamen to desist. The master, who had fortunately heard his account, understanding his motive, restrained the sailors, and the lives of the poor blacks were spared.

"I don't forget the mercy you showed me," said Archie, "but I wish you had managed to run off." Then, turning to the master, he begged that he would allow the blacks to escape. "If they are made prisoners I may be unable to save their lives," he said.

"Well, then, let us go and look after some others," exclaimed Mr Billhook. "Tell them to show leg-bail and we'll not follow them."

The kind-hearted seamen fully appreciating Archie's object were well pleased to let the poor trembling wretches escape, and led by the master, they pursued some others who had still retained their muskets, and who proved to be Coromantees, the most warlike and savage of the blacks engaged in the insurrection. Several of these attempting to make a stand were captured.

The shouts of the gallant band of seamen and marines had been heard by the garrison, and their movements and the flight of the blacks seen from the windows. The doors being thrown open, the greater number rushed out to join them in the pursuit of the fugitives, but their ammunition being expended they were unable to fire a shot, and the blacks happily for themselves were soon beyond the reach of the whites, or they would have received less merciful treatment than the blue jackets were inclined to show them. As it was, indeed, the British officers had some difficulty in restraining several of the drivers from cutting down the prisoners who had been secured. In a few minutes not a single black, except those who had been made prisoners and a few who lay dead or wounded on the ground, was to be seen.

Mr Foley, having ordered the recall to be sounded, hurried with Gerald to the house, where the first person they met was Mr Ferris, who at once recognised them. Taking them by the hands, he thanked them with tears in his eyes as the deliverers of his daughter and himself and their friends.

"You have rendered me for ever your debtor," said the merchant; "indeed, it is impossible to repay you."

Norman, making a fitting answer, eagerly inquired for Ellen.

"She is there," replied her father; and the words were scarcely out of his mouth before Norman sprang forward, and there he saw Ellen standing, somewhat pale indeed, though the colour began to mount rapidly to her cheeks, with her hands extended to greet him, her trembling limbs, however, preventing her from moving towards him as her feelings might have prompted. He had good reason to be satisfied that absence had not cooled her affection. Mr Twigg kindly allowed them to enjoy each other's society without interruption. Perhaps Norman would have remained longer than his duty ought to have permitted him, had not the sound of hearty cheers reached their ears, and he and Ellen on going into the hall were informed by Mr Ferris that a party of white men were seen coming over the hill who were thus welcomed by the garrison. Ellen now first heard of the escape of Archie Sandys, who had been heartily welcomed by all hands, among whom he was a universal favourite. He might before have had his suspicions as to the interest which Lieutenant Foley entertained for Miss Ferris. When he saw them together, he had no doubt about the matter, and the slight hopes he had cherished vanished for ever.

Mr Twigg in the meantime had dispatched people to the yam ground, and to every part of the neighbourhood where provisions could be found, though the blacks had consumed most of the roots and fruits as well as the animals they could lay hands on near the house. Water had also been brought up from the well to supply the thirsty inmates, while the sergeant of marines had drawn up his men, as he said, to observe the enemy, lest they should venture on another attack. That, however, did not appear probable, as numbers were seen flying at full speed towards the mountains to escape the vengeance of their masters, which they knew full well was likely to overtake them.

Jack Pemberton and the party from Walton now appeared.

"We hurried off as soon as Quashie arrived," said Jack, "but he with a misadventure, and was captured by some rebels who, though they could make nothing of him, detained him, and he had no little difficulty in making his escape. On our way we were overtaken by a messenger from Major Malcolm, who is advancing with a strong force, and depend upon it he will give the rebels a fearful drubbing if he overtakes them."

"We are much obliged to you, Jack, for your good intentions, but had not the party from the ship arrived in the nick of time, you would in all probability have found the house a heap of

ruins, and we all burned to cinders in the middle of it," answered Mr Twigg.

No one welcomed Archie Sandys more cordially than did Lieutenant Belt, who had greatly admired the coolness and courage he had displayed. He had now also a fellow feeling for him, as he quickly perceived that the sailor officer had forestalled him in the affections of Miss Ferris.

The family at Bellevue, notwithstanding the fearful danger they had gone through, soon recovered their spirits. Such provisions as could be hastily collected were cooked, and, as there was a good store of wine and other articles of luxury, an ample repast was soon prepared for their guests.

While they were seated round the table, it was announced that a body of soldiers were seen coming from the west, with several persons on horseback; and in a short time Major Malcolm and two other officers galloped up to the door. The expression of his countenance when Mr Twigg went out to meet him, and as he surveyed the havoc which had been made around the house, and saw the fearful danger to which the inmates had been exposed, showed how much he felt. He condemned himself for having quitted Bellevue, although he had gone at Miss Pemberton's express wish; but when he entered the room and saw her eyes turned towards him, and the slight tinge which rose to her generally pale cheeks, he knew that she, at all events, did not blame him. His stay could be but very brief, for as soon as the forces who were coming up arrived, he must push forward in pursuit of the rebel blacks.

"It is painful work, without honour or glory, and yet duty demands that it must be done," he observed to Miss Pemberton. "I would that others had to do it."

Mr Twigg did not fail to expatiate largely on the gallant conduct of Lieutenant Belt, and the important service he had rendered them. "It was indeed a happy day for us when you came here, for, had it not been for him, I believe that none of us would now be remaining alive; and I therefore propose the health of the hero of Bellevue, for such he deserves to be called."

Every one corroborated Mr Twigg's account, and the gallant lieutenant made a very neat and appropriate speech.

"As he is unfit to march, if you desire it, Mr Twigg, I will leave him here in command of a detachment sufficient to protect the house," said Major Malcolm, "as probably the marines and

sailors may be required on board their ship, to render aid in other directions."

Norman Foley was not especially obliged to the major for this offer, as he had thought it possible that he might again have been sent on shore in command of a party to protect the house. He had now, however, no excuse for remaining; he was therefore compelled, very unwillingly, to order his men to prepare for embarking.

"You will write to Norah, Miss Ferris," said Gerald, as he was wishing good-bye. "Tell her all about me, and say that I hope to see Owen Massey when he comes back again in the *Ouzel Galley*; and also tell her that we had a brush with, we believe, that same rascally buccaneer which attacked the old ship on her voyage out, when you were on board. The fellow escaped us, but we shall keep a sharp look-out for him and take him one of these days. I suppose that we shall remain on this northern coast for some time, and then go back to Port Royal, with lots of prizes, I have no doubt, and perhaps the pirate among them."

Ellen and Norman had to part, but they expected ere long to meet again at Kingston, to which place Mr Ferris intended returning as soon as the country was considered safe for travelling.

As the evening was approaching, Lieutenant Foley had to hurry his men to the boats, after a friendly parting with Archie Sandys. He had another reason for making haste, for he did not altogether like the look of the sky.

"What do you think of the weather, Mr Dobbs?" he asked.

"Coming on nasty, to my mind," answered the boatswain, casting his eye round the horizon. "Whether it is one of them hurricanes which blow in those seas, or only a common gale, I can't just say; but the sooner we are aboard, and the ship can get a good offing, the better."

Crowhurst, who had been some time before in the West Indies, was of the boatswain's opinion, and thought that they had already delayed too long; but, then, he was not, like the lieutenant, in love, and had found nothing of especial interest on shore.

The commander was highly pleased at hearing of the service his officers and men had performed, and did not blame the

lieutenant for remaining on shore so long. Indeed, he observed, "Had no other force appeared to protect the house, I should have considered it right to send you, with the marines and a few seamen, back to guard it, in case the rebels should return."

Norman heartily wished that Jack Pemberton with his friends, and Major Malcolm with his troops, had marched after the rebels, instead of coming to Bellevue.

The commander had observed the signs of a change of weather, and by the master's advice, who felt sure that a heavy gale would soon be blowing, though he could not say from what quarter it might come, the ship's head was put off shore, so as to gain as good an offing as possible before it was down upon them. The wind increased, and though the *Champion* could still carry her whole canvas, it was necessary to keep a bright look-out against a sudden squall, all hands remaining on deck, ready to shorten sail at a moment's notice.

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## Chapter Eighteen.

**The Champion in a hurricane—Hove on her beam-ends—Loss of main and mizen-masts—Runs on before the gale—Strikes on a reef—An island discovered at daybreak—Boats and stores got out—The crew reach the shore—Water found—Site for a fort chosen—Stores and guns landed—A gale—Ship goes to pieces—Launch lost—A vessel seen—Chased—Escapes—Fort finished—A Spanish man-of-war approaches—Attacks the fort—Spaniards defeated—A gale—Spanish ship lost—Vain attempts to save the crew.**

The *Champion* was standing across the channel between Jamaica and Cuba. The night came on very dark. The wind, though blowing fresh from the north-west, did not increase as much as had been expected, and it was hoped that the ship would claw off the shore and obtain a good offing before the morning. The topgallantsails had been handed, and as much canvas was set as she could carry. The master turned many an anxious glance over the quarter, where he could still dimly discern the outline of the land. The ship was heeling over till her lee bulwarks were smothered in the fast-rising sea. Still the commander was unwilling to shorten sail while she could bear what she was then carrying. It was impossible to say from

which direction the wind might next blow. It might come from the northward, and if so, she would have the shore dead under her lee, and, should her masts go, might be driven helplessly towards it. Another reef was taken in the topsails, but still she heeled over to the wind more than the commander liked, notwithstanding which she was evidently making considerable leeway.

At length there came a lull; the ship righted, and for some time continued to stand up better than heretofore to her canvas. The appearance of the sky, however, did not improve. Dark masses of clouds flew across it, gradually thickening till a dense canopy hung over the ocean without any discernible break. The wind howled and whistled, and the sea rose more and more.

"We'll heave the ship to, Mr Billhook," said the commander. "We have got, I should think, a sufficient offing, and we must return to the shore as soon as the weather will allow."

"If you will take my advice, sir, we will rather stand on for some time longer. We are perhaps nearer the coast than we may fancy, and we might find it a hard matter to get off again, should we discover in the morning that we have been drifting towards it."

"Keep her as she is going, then," said the commander, who thought that the master was probably right.

Soon after this the wind somewhat lulled, and the ship looked up more to the northward than she had hitherto done, showing that the wind had shifted a point or two. Even the master thought that the weather was improving. The watch below was ordered to turn in and some of the officers went to their berths.

It had just gone two bells in the morning watch, when a sound like a thunder-clap was heard, and Gerald, who was in his hammock, was nearly thrown out of it. He felt the ship heeling over to starboard. He and all those below, slipping into their trousers, sprang on deck. The ship was on her beam-ends, the water washing half-way up to the coamings of the hatchways.

"Hard up with the helm! let fly the main and mizen-topsail sheets!" cried the commander; but the ship did not rise or answer the helm. "Cut away the mizen-mast!" he shouted; and the carpenter and boatswain, armed with axes, came aft, and while some of the men severed the rigging, a few blows served to send the mast, with its spars and fluttering sails, over the side. At the same moment the mainmast, which must already

have been sprung when the hurricane struck the ship, fell after it, and the seamen immediately commenced hacking away at the rigging to clear the wreck. The ship thus relieved, rose to an even keel, and now feeling the power of the helm, away she flew before the gale.

The master hurried to the binnacle. The wind had happily shifted to the westward, and though blowing with far greater fury than before, the ship was in less peril than she would have been had it continued in its former quarter. The yards were now squared and preventer backstays set up, and the carpenter, having examined the mast, reported that it was secure. The hands were sent to close-reef the fore-topsail; but even though thus reduced, it was as much sail as the ship could carry. On she flew, free from the wreck of both the masts, which it was impossible to secure. Every effort was made to secure the remaining mast, on which so much depended. Some spare spars still remained, with which, when the weather moderated, jury-masts could be rigged; but with the heavy sea now running, nothing could be done. The wind kept veering about, sometimes to the southward and west, at others getting back to the north-west.

"Provided it does not shift to the northward, we shall have room to run on till it blows itself out," observed the master. But there was no security that it would hold in the most favourable quarter.

The hurricane blew harder and harder—for such it might almost be considered, though not one of those fearful storms which so frequently devastate the islands of the Caribbean Sea. The rain, too, beat down furiously, and the spoondrift in thick showers flew off the summits of the seas, shrouding the ship in a dense mist, through which no objects, had any been near, could have been discerned. At present, the chief fear was lest the ship should run foul of any other hove to, for none could cross her course under sail.

On she flew. Daylight returned, but the view around was almost as obscure as during the night. The master consulted the chart. He would have wished to haul to the southward, but the sea was running too high and the wind blowing too furiously for that to be done; neither, in consequence of the loss of her after-rails, could she be hove to. Her only safe course was to fly before it. Except the close-reefed topsail, no other canvas was set. The *Champion* had by this time got to the eastward of Cuba, and was compelled to run on far away from the coast her commander wished to reach.



Another day and night passed by, the wind blowing with scarcely less fury than at first. The well was sounded, but it was found that the ship had made no unusual amount of water. If she could steer clear of rocks and reefs, the only other thing to be apprehended was that, while in her crippled condition, she might fall in with an enemy's ship of equal or superior force. Numerous reefs and rocks however existed, and as it had been impossible to take an observation, or even to keep an exact dead reckoning, in consequence of the frequent shifting of the wind, the master confessed that he was not certain of her position. She was, he supposed, approaching the southern end of the dangerous Bahama Islands, known as the Great Caicos. The island of Inagua, it was hoped, was passed, but even that was not certain.

Another night was coming on. All on board hoped that the gale would blow itself out, but as the darkness increased, it gave no signs of doing so. A sharp look-out was of course kept, ahead, and the cables were ranged ready to let go the anchors should any danger be seen.

Except when wearied out, in order to snatch a short rest, few of the officers or men had gone below. Most of them were collected on deck, when a voice from forward shouted out, "Breakers on the starboard bow!" and almost immediately afterwards their roar was heard, and the white foam could be seen dashing up over a dark reef. The helm was put a couple of spokes to windward; the ship flew on. Scarcely had the danger been passed, when the wind fell and the sea became rapidly calmer.

"Has not the sea gone down with wonderful quickness?" observed Gerald to Nat Kiddle, who was standing near him, both of them trying to peer out through the darkness.

"I suppose it is because we are protected by the reef we passed," answered Nat. "I only hope we shall not meet with others."

"Breakers ahead!" shouted the look-out from forward.

"Starboard the helm, hard a-starboard!" cried the commander.

The ship came to the wind, and as she did so the white foam was seen rising directly under her lee. The threatened danger was passed, although so narrowly that her keel grated over a rock below it.

"Stand ready to let go the best bower!" was the next order heard.

"Hands aloft to furl the fore-topsail!" Scarcely had the commander uttered the words than a terrific crashing sound was heard. The ship had struck a sunken reef. The way she had on her forced her over it.

"Sound the well, Mr O'Rourke," cried the commander.

Before, however, the carpenter could obey the order, the ship again struck and remained fixed, apparently on a reef. Soundings were immediately taken ahead and astern, and from the small depth, of water round her, it was too clear that she had been driven hopelessly on a broad reef. The sea dashed against her, sending the spray in dense showers over her decks; but it was evident that there were reefs outside which greatly protected her, and that there was no immediate danger of her being dashed to pieces, or the crew losing their lives. The darkness prevented any object from being seen round her, except black rocks and the snow-white foam which flew off from the summits of the seas. The crew behaved, as well-disciplined British seamen always do under such circumstances, with perfect coolness. The men who were going aloft to furl the fore-topsail were ordered down, and the commander directed the carpenter to cut away the remaining mast, as it threatened every instant to fall. A few strokes of the axe brought it down over the fore-castle, the wind carrying it in that direction.

"I fear the old bark is lost," said Gerald to Nat Kiddle. "I little expected to see such an ending of her."

"No doubt about it," answered Nat. "The water is rushing like a mill-sluice into the hold, and if it wasn't that she is firm on the rocks, she would not have many minutes to swim."

"Faith, I don't think she's swimming now," said Gerald.

"No," answered Nat; "but she is not going down, and that is of considerable consequence to us. When daylight comes I suppose we shall find out where we are. I hope that land is not far off, or we may have to make a voyage on a raft, as the boats won't hold us all."

Norman Foley's chief feeling was disappointment at the probability of not being able to return to Jamaica for an indefinite period of time. The distance was too great to perform

with any safety in boats; indeed, it was doubtful, without masts to hoist her out, whether the launch could be got into the water.

As other shipwrecked seamen have done, all wished for day to relieve their anxieties. At present it was impossible to decide what to do. Gradually the ship became steadier. As the sea broke over her less frequently, the master was of opinion that the tide was falling, and that she had been driven on shore at high water.

The commander and his first lieutenant accompanied the carpenter round the ship to ascertain more particularly her condition. They quickly came to the conclusion that she was hopelessly wrecked. "The first thing to be done, then, is to get the stores from the hold while the tide is out, and to save the ammunition," observed the commander. "Should we reach the shore, we must not leave ourselves defenceless."

The crew were accordingly at once ordered to set to work, and beef, pork, flour, and other stores were hoisted up, while the powder was got out of the magazine and placed in the commander's cabin with a guard over it.

Daylight found all hands thus busily employed. The wind had gone down and the sea was perfectly smooth. The commander was on deck when the first light streaks of dawn appeared in the sky. As the light increased, he discerned a line of cocoa-nut trees rising out of one of the low islands, known as keys in those seas, scarcely half a mile off, while in the intermediate space were numerous dark rocks, the upper portions of reefs which extended on every side. Between them, however, were wide spaces of calm water, so that there would be nothing to stop the boats from reaching the island. The satisfactory intelligence was soon made known through the ship. The smaller boats were at once lowered, while the carpenter and boatswain set to work to erect shears for hoisting out the launch. As soon as the boats were ready, the commander ordered them to be loaded with provisions, and canvas for tents, and a portion of the powder, and they were sent off under the command of the second lieutenant, with Gerald and Kiddle. The two latter were directed to remain in charge of half a dozen of the men, while the boats were immediately to return. In the mean while a raft was commenced, to assist in transporting the guns and stores, all of which the commander intended if possible to save. The crew were so busily employed that they had no time to indulge in apprehensions for the future, should they have entertained any.

The commander's chief anxiety was to ascertain if water existed on the island. Without it they would be unable to support themselves, beyond a short period, when that on board was exhausted. The midshipmen were accordingly directed to search for water immediately on their landing. Away they pulled, their spirits scarcely lowered even by the loss of their ship. As they looked back at her as she lay on the rocks, with her masts gone and heeling over on one side, Gerald, however, exclaimed—

"Poor old girl, there you are, and there you will leave your bones. I don't suppose you care much about it, though you don't find it as pleasant as bounding over the heaving waves, as the poets say."

"We shall not find it so pleasant, either, living on that sandy-looking island ahead there," observed Kiddle.

As they drew near the island its appearance improved. They could see a variety of trees and bushes, and that the ground rose beyond them. Further in the interior the green grass, which here and there was visible, gave promise of an abundance of water, so that they should not have, as they at first feared, to suffer from thirst. In a little bay, with rocks rising on one side, they found a convenient landing-place, towards which the boats were steered. The goods were quickly got on shore, and carried up to a level spot under the shade of some cocoa-nut trees.

Here, as soon as Mr Foley had shoved off, Gerald and Nat set to work with their men to put up the tents in which the provisions were to be stored. Gerald then, taking one of the crew with him, set off to look for water as he had been directed. The island appeared to be scarcely half a mile across, but it was considerably longer. A somewhat elevated ridge ran down the centre, from which, before he had gone far, he saw an ample stream gushing forth into a pool, after which it ran in a meandering course towards the side of the island where they had landed. Having made this discovery, they returned to the camp. Soon afterwards the boats came back with some men and a further supply of provisions. He then learned that the commander intended to land the guns.

The work continued all day long, and towards evening the boats returned, towing a large raft on which several of the guns were placed. The only bad news was that, in trying to get the launch into the water, she had been severely damaged, and as it would have occupied time to tow her on shore full of water, she had been left anchored near the ship. About a third of the crew, with the marines, under charge of Mr Foley, had now landed; the

commander and the remainder, with a portion of the officers, still staying on board. Crowhurst, who came with the raft, said that there was no danger, and that the commander intended to be the last man to leave the ship.

As there was abundance of wood, fires were lighted, provisions cooked, and the shipwrecked crew prepared to make themselves as happy as they could. Some, indeed, when they had knocked off work, amused themselves by playing leapfrog on the sands, and running races; and the black cook, who had brought his fiddle, beginning to scrape away, set the whole dancing. At last they were ordered to turn in, and though it was not likely that any enemy was near, sentries were stationed round the camp, according to man-o'-war fashion.

Norman Foley walked up and down on the beach long after his men had gone to sleep. The boats and raft had returned to the ship. He cast his eye round to note the appearance of the weather. Should it again come on to blow, her position would be one of considerable danger, and those on board might have great difficulty in saving their lives. Should the boats be destroyed, he and those with him would scarcely be better off without the means of escaping. They might have to remain there for weeks or months, for no vessel was likely willingly to approach so dangerous a neighbourhood. The provisions, though sufficient to last for some time, must ultimately be exhausted, as would be the ammunition, with which birds might be shot. Then what would be the consequence? "It is useless to indulge in such thoughts," he said to himself at last. "With a few hours' rest I shall feel more cheerful." He did the wisest thing to be done under such circumstances—he went into his tent and fell fast asleep.

On rising the next morning, he saw the raft and boats again approaching. Mr Tarwig came in command of them, with directions from the commander to choose a site for erecting a battery on the island with their guns. "The commander thinks it probable that the Spaniards, when they find out that we are here, will attack us for the sake of making us prisoners, and the sooner we are prepared for them the better," he said to Lieutenant Foley.

While the other officers and men were engaged in landing the stores which the boats had brought, the two lieutenants walked together across the island, and then followed the rise which ran along the centre on the eastern side. Although there were many reefs on that side, the island was more approachable than on the west, where the *Champion* had been wrecked, and after a

careful survey they fixed on a spot below which it appeared that a ship might approach the shore. Consequently it was the spot which an enemy would probably choose for landing with boats.

The lieutenants were not long in marking out the site of their proposed fort. The ground was here covered more thickly than, in other places with trees, some of considerable height, which would effectually mask it from the sea. The island was of a width which would enable the guns in the fort to defend it on both sides, as some might be so placed as to command their own landing-place, should an enemy attempt to come on shore on that side. Having formed their plan, they returned to the camp. Here all hands were still busily employed in getting the guns on shore. The difficulty was to drag them up to the site chosen for the fort. Their own carriages, which had been also landed, were of no use for this purpose; but the carpenter suggested that rollers should be placed under them, and, ropes being secured to the breeches, they could be dragged up by the crew.

While the first lieutenant returned to the ship, Norman Foley directed the carpenter to form his proposed rollers, and to try what could be done with one of the guns. Some of the rigging had already been brought on shore on the raft, and there was an abundance of ropes for the purpose.

The carpenter and his crew were not long in getting all things ready. Four rollers were placed under one of the guns, and a party were told off to take charge of four others, while the rest of the crew laid hold of the towlines. The boatswain sounded his whistle, and off they set. It was pretty hard work to draw a heavy gun over the soft sand, but British seamen are not to be defeated when they put their shoulders to an undertaking. The gun was started amid cheers from the crew, and it began to move forward faster and faster. The moment one roller was released it was carried ahead, and at length the gun was dragged up to hard ground. Now, however, the tug of war began. Though the ground was hard, it was rough and uphill; but the inequalities were cleared away, and the gun was got some distance up the bank. It became evident, however, at length that the whole strength of the crew would be required to get it up to the site of the fort, and the lieutenant ordered the men to knock off, and to bring another gun up. This was soon done in the same fashion. The seamen enjoyed the work as if it had been given to them as an amusement.

Thus six guns which had been landed were got a part of the way towards their destination. Parties of men were next harnessed

to the gun carriages, a boatswain's mate or one of the other seamen seating himself on each—the former with pipe in mouth, and with a long stick in his hand, with which he pretended to drive his team, cheering and shouting in high glee. One of the carriages, however, as the men were running along with it, capsized and shot its occupant out sprawling on the sand, greatly to the amusement of his shipmates. It is wonderful what an amount of work can be got through by seamen when they are allowed to do it in their own way, and make an amusement of the severest labour.

It would still require the raft and boats to make very many trips before all the guns and provisions and stores could be landed. The commander wisely sent off a proportion of each, so that, should bad weather come on and the ship go to pieces, a certain amount of all things necessary might be saved. The weather, however, continued favourable, though the stormy period of the year had now come on. All the guns and provisions, and a considerable quantity of the stores, were at length landed. The carpenter had of course taken good care to bring his tools. He proposed building a vessel out of the wreck. The commander approved of his suggestion, and it was arranged that they should return the next day, and endeavour to procure timber sufficient for the purpose.

The commander had hitherto not left the ship. The last of the crew who had remained with him were sent into the boat. His own gig was alongside. With a heavy heart he hauled down the flag, which had hitherto been kept flying on a temporary flagstaff, secured to the stump of the foremast. After looking round his dismantled ship, he descended into the boat.

"Shove off," he said, and his voice as he spoke appeared to have lost its usual cheerful ring.

He cast another fond look at her as she lay bilged on the cruel rocks. He had reason to be thankful that not a life had been lost, and that it was from no carelessness or want of good seamanship that she had been driven on shore. Had she struck one of the outer reefs, where would he and his gallant crew now be? Probably not one would have escaped. The sky as he looked westward had again assumed a threatening aspect.

"We shall have another gale before long, I suspect," he observed to Gerald, who had brought the gig for him. "It may not do us on shore much harm, although it may blow down our tents if we don't stay them up well, but the poor ship—I fear that her days are numbered. A heavy sea rolling in here would

soon knock her to pieces. Give way, my lads, and overtake the raft; we may assist in towing it, and the sooner it reaches the shore the better."

Fortunately by this time everything of value had been landed from the ship. The cabins had been stripped of their furniture, even to the bedding; the men's hammocks, and every article belonging to them, had been brought off. There was an abundance of water, and there was no probability of their provisions running short for some time to come.

Scarcely had the boats and raft been unloaded and the stores carried up to the camp, than the sea began to roll in with much greater force than hitherto, and as the sun went down the white breakers appeared on every side, like horses' manes waving in the wind, above the darkening waters. The commander was received with hearty cheers by his crew.

"Now, my lads," he said, "I intend to turn this island into a man-of-war, and although we cannot get under way—for if we could we would soon run her up to Port Royal harbour—we will hold her against all enemies, whoever they may be, who may wish to make a prize of us. I intend to maintain the same discipline as heretofore, and I expect that you will still remain the well-ordered crew of whom I have always been proud."

The captain's address was received, as he expected it would be, with hearty cheers, and several voices among the men cried out, "We'll stick by you, sir, and you won't have to be ashamed of us."

Several fires had been lighted, round which the men were collected, cooking their suppers in a fashion in which Jack especially delights when he has the chance; but the rising wind soon made it necessary to put them all out, for fear of their setting the bushes and trees in flames, or lest a wandering spark might find its way to the tent in which the powder was stored. This, by Mr Foley's forethought, had been erected some way from the camp, and a sentry placed over it. The next thing to be done was to secure the tents with preventer-stays, as the seamen called them. By this means, furiously as the wind began to blow, not a tent was capsized. Being composed of sails, they were much lower than ordinary tents, and thus much less exposed than such would have been. They resembled indeed gipsy tents, though on a larger scale. It was fortunate for the shipwrecked crew that they had been erected in good time, for as the night drew on the rain came down in torrents, and would have drenched them to the skin. The wind increased, howling



and whistling amid the cocoa-nut trees; while the sea, as it dashed with increasing fury on the shore, uttered continuous and never-ceasing roars, echoed, so it seemed, by the breakers on the more distant reefs. The commander, who had scarcely closed his eyes on board, shared a tent with his lieutenants and the surgeon. His chief care, for the present was over, and he at length fell fast asleep.

"It is a hard trial for him, poor man," observed the surgeon, as he and the two lieutenants sat at their table at the further end of the tent. "Though it may not be the commander's fault when he loses his ship, he must feel it dreadfully."

"Somewhat as you feel when you lose a patient, Mac," observed Mr Tarwig.

"Nay, nay," answered the doctor. "I have a better chance of getting fresh patients, whereas the captain who loses his ship is often looked upon as unfortunate, and may chance not to get another—"

"That he may have the opportunity of losing her, doctor, you would say, just as you would desire to have the chance of losing some fresh patients."

"You're hard on me, Tarwig," said the doctor. "My desire is to cure them. And just remember that men's lives are not in our hands: all we can do is to employ such knowledge as we possess. That may be but little, I confess, for I tell you our ignorance is great. If I pride myself on anything, it is that I am aware that I know next to nothing, and that is what many fools do not."

"Well said, Mac," observed Norman. "I always had a respect for you, and I have a greater now, and shall have perfect confidence in your skill, if I should have again to come to you for assistance. I believe I owe my life to you when I was wounded, as far as I owe it to any human being."

"Nay, nay," again said the doctor, laughing. "You owe it, to my thinking, to a fair young lady who looked after you so carefully when we put you on shore at Waterford—for you were in a bad way then, let me tell you, though I did not say so at the time."

"He has repaid the debt, doctor, for I understand that the same young lady was in the house attacked by the rebels, and that they were on the point of entering it and murdering all the

inmates, when he drove them to the right-about," said Mr Tarwig.

In another tent the master and purser, with the midshipmen, were engaged in amusing themselves in a more uproarious fashion. Many a merry stave and sentimental ditty was sung, and not a few yarns were spun, anecdotes told, and jokes cut, albeit not of the newest. The remainder of the shipwrecked men having been pretty well worked during the day, soon turned in, and in spite of the storm raging over their heads went fast asleep; the only people awake being the sentries, who, wrapped in their greatcoats, their firelocks sheltered under them, stood with their backs to the wind.

Thus the night passed away. With the morning light the rain ceased, and as Norman, who was the first among the officers on foot, looked in the direction of the spot where the ship had been, she was nowhere to be seen, but here and there amid the foam-covered reefs fragments of the wreck could be discerned, tossed about by the tumbling seas. He had reason to be thankful that such had not been her fate while the crew were still on board. He was soon joined by Mr Tarwig. He pointed in the direction of the wreck.

"Our chance of building a craft to carry us away is gone," observed the first lieutenant, with a sigh. "Well, we must bear our lot patiently, and maybe some friendly craft may heave in sight. And if a friend does not come, why, perhaps an enemy will; and if so, we must capture her, and change places with her crew."

"Little chance of that, I fear," said Norman, who, eager as he was to get off, had from the first not been very sanguine of doing so.

After the crew had been piped up, and Mr Tarwig had mustered them and gone through the usual duties performed by a first lieutenant—although, as he observed with one of his comical looks to Norman, he need not get the decks washed, the rain having done that already—they re-entered their tent, to which their servants brought fresh water for their morning ablutions. Fires were lighted, though the wood did not burn at first very briskly, and the cooks busied themselves in preparing for breakfast.

The commander on going out of his tent took one glance seaward. "I feared it would be so," he said, turning away his head. "Now, Mr Tarwig, we'll get our fort under way."

"It would be a hard matter to do that, sir," answered the first lieutenant, screwing up his mouth, with a twinkle in his eye, "seeing it is not built yet."

The commander, who knew he was fond of a joke, laughed, and desired to be shown the proposed site. On inspecting it, he highly approved of the spot selected.

Immediately breakfast was over, all hands were ordered to man the guns and commence the work of dragging them up the hill. One at a time, however, only could be moved, till it was got near enough to a stout tree to which a tackle could be fixed, and the seamen then ran it up the steepest part of the ascent with surprising rapidity.

Before the day was over half the guns were placed in position, and by means of stout shears, which were erected on the hill, were hoisted on their carriages. The rest were allowed to remain where they were till the embankments were thrown up. The smith and his mates, with such hands as he required, had put up a forge, and he and the carpenters had been busily engaged manufacturing pickaxes and spades. With such as had been finished the men were the next day set to work on the trenches, some being employed in cutting down trees to serve for the woodwork which was required. Eighty men were engaged in these operations, and it seemed extraordinary how much that number of willing hands could get through, the officers all labouring away to set them the example.

The commander was well pleased as he surveyed the work. "We shall be able to give a fair account of an enemy should one attack us before many days are over," he observed to Mr Tarwig. "I think it very probable, should the Spaniards find out we are here, that they will not let us alone, as they will fancy that for some reason or other we have taken possession of the island."

"Ay, sir; but I have a notion we should be able to beat them off without these embankments, satisfactory as it may be to have them as shelter," answered the first lieutenant.

It took, however, several days to complete the fort, and when that was done, one of the chief objects of the commander was to find occupation for the men. He knew that it would never do to let them be too long idle. Among the stores saved were several seines; one or two of these were drawn every day on the sandy portions of the beach, and never failed to catch a number of fish, which added to the store of provisions. Drawing

the seine afforded not only occupation but amusement to the men, who engaged in it with the greatest avidity. The fresh fish, too, assisted to keep scurvy at a distance. The surgeon explored the island in search of any vegetable productions which might assist in that object. Happily there were a good number of cocoa-nuts, but it was necessary to husband them, or the men would have consumed them in the course of a day or two.

Though it was necessary to prepare for a long stay, the commander took the requisite measures for attracting the notice of any passing vessels. A high flagstaff was put up in the centre of the fort, from which the British ensign was kept flying from sunrise to sunset, and on the two highest points of the island piles of firewood were placed ready to light up at night, should it be considered expedient to try and attract the attention of any ships seen in the offing. There might, however, be a danger in doing this, lest a stranger, standing too close in, might run on the rocks. By firing guns, however, she might be warned off. Of course, by these means it was as likely that an enemy would be attracted to the spot as a friend, but this caused them no anxiety, as they could beat off any vessel which might come with hostile intentions.

Day after day, however, went by, and no sail appeared in sight. As soon as the weather moderated the boats were launched, and the second lieutenant and master, with Crowhurst, pulled round the island and surveyed its approaches in every direction. They found but two channels through which a vessel of any size could approach to attack them, and that could only be done with the greatest caution, by those who had a thorough knowledge of the navigation. Indeed, the island was almost completely surrounded by reefs, some rising above the surface, others sunk beneath it at different depths. These, it was found, extended to a considerable distance from the shore, so that no craft of large size was likely intentionally to approach. After the survey had been completed, Lieutenant Foley offered to try and make his way to Jamaica in the pinnace, the largest boat which now remained, the launch having been lost with the ship.

"I cannot let you go," answered Captain Olding. "Even should the weather continue favourable, the probabilities are that you would be picked up by a Spaniard or a Frenchman, and you would fail to reach your destination."

"But I might as probably be picked up by an English man-of-war or a merchant vessel, sir," answered Norman, who was eager to make the attempt.

The commander, however, was inexorable, and the lieutenant did not again for some time venture to broach the subject.

The shipwrecked crew continued in vain to look out for relief, and Commander Olding remained firm to his resolution of not allowing one of the boats to try and make her way to Jamaica.

Notwithstanding the refusal Lieutenant Foley had received, Mr Billhook, the master, offered to take charge of the pinnace with four or five volunteers. "No great harm can happen if we are taken, sir, and still less, some will say, if we go to the bottom, but the chances are we get clear and arrive all right," he urged.

"One great harm would happen. Should you be captured, the enemy would suspect where you came from, even if you refuse to tell them, and we should have them coming here to try and cut us off," answered the commander. "Wait patiently, gentlemen. Either some friendly vessel will appear, or a French or Spanish trader or guarda-costa will some day come to an anchor within the reefs; then, if we manage carefully, we shall be able to get aboard her before she has time to cut her cable and run out to sea."

This idea of the commander's soon got talked about, and all hands were constantly on the watch for any vessel which they might hope to capture. Not that the seamen were in any great hurry to leave the island; as long as they had an ample supply of food and liquor they were happy, while they had sufficient occupation to keep them out of mischief.

A look-out for any craft which might approach the shore was of course constantly kept on both sides of the island. A mist had hung over the sea during the night, which completely concealed all objects, except those close at hand, from view. The sun rising above the horizon dispersed the mist, when a small vessel was discovered under sail, threading her way among the reefs to the westward. Those on board her must have perceived the fort with the people moving about, and the British flag which had just been hoisted on the flagstaff, for she immediately kept away, and, the wind being to the eastward, ran off before it towards the open sea. If she could be captured she would afford the means of sending to Jamaica, though she could not carry all the crew. The boats were therefore launched, and chase was made; but, the breeze freshening, the stranger got clear out to sea, when all chance of overtaking her was abandoned. Much disappointment was felt—but as one vessel had come off the island so might others, and it was hoped that one of sufficient size would appear to carry the whole ship's company. The

commander, being a sensible man, advised his officers to be patient, and to make the best of the circumstances under which they were placed.

After the fort was completed, and all the huts required were erected, the officers had work enough in devising employment and amusement for the men. They encouraged games of all sorts—football, cricket, rounders, and ninepins; indeed, a stranger coming among them would not have supposed that the merry fellows he saw were a shipwrecked crew, especially if they had been found playing leapfrog, or dancing to the sound of Pat Casey's fiddle. The commander and his officers were not, however, without anxiety; they knew that no British ships, either men-of-war or merchant vessels, were likely intentionally to approach the dangerous reefs which surrounded the island, and that their store of provisions must in time come to an end.

"We must not run the risk of starving," observed Commander Olding; "and in the course of a couple of months, if we do not get off, I will allow you, Foley, or Mr Billhook to try and make your way, as you propose, to Jamaica."

"I shall be ready to go at any time you give me leave," answered the second lieutenant, well pleased with the thoughts of getting away from the island and once more meeting Ellen. By that time the hurricane season would be over, and he hoped to be able to make the passage safely.

"I trust, sir, that you will let me accompany you," said Gerald, when he heard that there was at length a chance of a boat being sent off.

"That must depend on the commander," answered Lieutenant Foley. "If he will give you leave, I will gladly take you, as I can depend thoroughly on you; but I suspect that he will prefer sending Crowhurst. However, we have some weeks to wait, and many things may occur in the mean time."

"Thank you, sir, for your kindness," answered Gerald, highly pleased at the compliment paid him, and thinking nothing of the danger to be run during a voyage of some hundred miles in an open boat, with a chance of being picked up by an enemy's cruiser, or by one of the piratical craft which were known to infest those seas. Gerald was not given to boasting, but he confided to Nat Kiddle the promise Mr Foley had made him.

"I wonder whether he would take me too," said Nat. "I should not like to be left here without you. I should wonderfully enjoy

the trip. What fun it would be if we were chased, and managed, notwithstanding, to get away!"

"It would be no fun if we were caught, however," answered Gerald; "but I hope that won't happen. Depend on it, Mr Foley will do his best to keep clear of an enemy."

Still some weeks had to be passed before the commander would consent to send off a boat, while not a vessel appeared in sight. The weather had remained fine for some time, but at length it gave signs of changing. One evening, as the commander, with several of the officers, were taking a quarter-deck walk on a piece of level ground near the flagstaff, occasionally sweeping the horizon with their glasses, now to the eastward, and now on the west side of the island, the commander, who had turned his in the latter direction, exclaimed, "There is a sail at last. Judging from her appearance she is a large craft; we shall soon ascertain how she is standing."

The other glasses were turned towards the stranger, and in a few minutes the general opinion was that she was approaching the island. The wind was blowing pretty fresh from the south-west. Her topgallantsails had been above the horizon when she was first seen; gradually her topsails, then the heads of her courses, rose above the water. "Is she a friend or an enemy?" was the question asked by several of those watching her. Hopes, of course, were entertained that she might be the former. Gerald and Nat Kiddle thought that she must be a British man-of-war.

"See what a wide spread of canvas she has," observed Gerald; "no merchant vessel would carry sails like that."

"If so, then our chance of a trip in the boat is over," said Nat.

The commander and his lieutenants discussed the subject earnestly.

"She is not a British ship," exclaimed Mr Tarwig, who had been watching her attentively through his glass for a minute or more; "that craft out there is a Spaniard. She is coming here to see what we are about. Depend on it, the little craft we saw the other day has carried the information that we are here, and the Spaniards have come to turn us out, if they can."

"I believe you are right," observed the commander, after again examining the stranger. "We must be prepared for whatever may happen. If, as you suspect, yonder ship is a Spaniard, she

comes with the intention of taking us. What say you, Mr Billhook?"

"I agree with the first lieutenant, sir," answered the master.

"And what is your opinion, Foley?"

"I have little doubt that she is an enemy, and probably well acquainted with the reefs. If so, she will stand in near enough to attack the fort; or if its existence is not known, the Spaniards will send their boats on shore, expecting without difficulty to make us all prisoners," answered the second lieutenant.

"They will find that they are mistaken," observed the commander. "Get all the boats hauled up and placed under shelter behind the rocks, Mr Billhook. Call the men to their quarters, see that the guns are ready for action, and serve out arms and ammunition. We shall somewhat surprise the enemy if they attempt to land, for they are not likely to know of the existence of the fort, and will probably at once send their boats on shore, expecting to carry us off without difficulty."

The men, who had, like their officers, been watching the approach of the stranger, were well pleased when they heard that she was supposed to be an enemy, and were eager for a fight. It would be a pleasant variety to the monotony of their existence, and no one entertained a doubt but that they should beat her off. The rays of the setting sun, glancing on her side as it rose above the water, showed her to be a large frigate. Though her flag could not be seen, not a doubt was entertained that she was Spanish. The wind, however, had fallen, and she was still some three or four miles beyond the outer reefs; when darkness settled down on the ocean, she was seen to haul her wind, apparently to lay to till daylight. The night was unusually dark, so that nothing could be seen of her.

The men were kept under arms, and sentries were posted round the island at the different points at which boats could land, to give notice should any approach, in which case the sentries were directed to fire off their muskets and retire to the fort. The officers continually went their rounds to ascertain that the men were awake and attending to their duty. Hour after hour passed by, still no sounds were heard to indicate the approach of an enemy.

It was within an hour of dawn, when Mr Foley, who having just visited the western side of the island, had returned to the fort, heard a musket fired, and presently afterwards a sentry came



running up. "I caught the sound of the splash of the oars in the water, sir," he said; "they cannot be far off. They hope to catch us asleep, for they seem to be making as little noise as possible."

As the man was speaking, another sentry's musket was heard to go off. He quickly came up and gave the same report as the first. The garrison were at once ordered to stand to their guns, and the two sentries were sent off to bring in their comrades.

"My lads, we shall probably be attacked in a few minutes by Spaniards: perhaps there may be soldiers as well as seamen among them, but I know that I can depend on you to beat them off," exclaimed the commander. "Not a gun or musket must be fired until I give the order. They may or may not know, of the existence of our fort; possibly they suppose that we are without defences, and expect easily to make us prisoners. Don't cheer now—let not a sound be heard till they get close up to us; they perhaps expect to surround our camp, but as they know we are awake, they cannot hope to capture us without a struggle, and will come on cautiously."

The guns had been loaded with grape and canister. The men not required to work them were armed with muskets, so that should even the greater part of the frigate's crew have been sent on shore, the shipwrecked party might well hope to drive them back.

The commander had taken up a position from whence he could command a view of the approaches to the fort on every side; and other sharp eyes were likewise looking out. So long a time elapsed that he began to fancy that the sentries had given a false alarm, and he was on the point of despatching a party down to the nearest landing-place, when he caught sight of a body of men emerging from the gloom. They approached cautiously, evidently doubtful of the reception they might meet with.

The seamen stood at their guns with the matches in their hands concealed from view; perfect silence reigned throughout the fort. The enemy crept steadily on, not knowing how near they were to their expected prey, the outline of the fort not being yet visible to them through the darkness. Commander Olding judged from the ground they covered that there must be between two and three hundred men—double the number of his own crew. Suddenly they halted, probably having just then discovered the fort. Two or three figures, apparently those of officers, were seen moving in front of them; then a shout was

heard, and the whole line, advancing, fired their matchlocks, the bullets flying thick as hail over the fort.

The commander leaped down from his exposed position unhurt. "Now, give it to them, my lads!" he cried, and the guns sent forth an iron shower into the midst of their assailants. Shrieks and cries arose from the direction of the enemy, who had evidently not expected to find the English possessed of guns. Still the little garrison fully expected to be attacked; but when the smoke from the first discharge of the guns cleared off, the whole body of the enemy were discovered in rapid flight, making their way back to their boats.

"Let us follow them, sir," cried several voices from among the men; "not one of them shall get back to their ship."

"They have been sufficiently punished, and are not likely to renew the attack," answered the commander, who had no wish to make prisoners, and saw no necessity for the utter destruction of the enemy. "If they come on again they must take the consequences."

The seamen were somewhat disappointed at this, but they knew that it would be useless to expostulate. They remained at their guns, hoping that the enemy would again attack them; but when daylight appeared, the boats were seen making their way back to the frigate, which lay outside the reef. On the ground they had occupied when the fort opened fire on them were stretched upward of a dozen dead men. It was evident that the Spanish had carried off their wounded, who probably numbered as many more. A party was at once sent down, accompanied by the surgeon, to ascertain if any of those on the ground were still alive; but Mac, having gone round and examined each of these carefully, pronounced them all as "dead as herrings."

"There, my lads," he said to the men, who had come with pickaxes and spades. "Now you may bury them all as fast as you like; their fighting days are over."

The seamen carried the bodies off to a distance from the fort, when having dug a large grave, they tumbled them in without any ceremony. Before the sun had risen many degrees above the horizon, the dead Spaniards were for ever put out of the sight of their fellow-creatures.

Meantime, the proceedings of the frigate had been watched with no inconsiderable interest by Commander Olding and his officers. The wind was still blowing a moderate breeze from the

south-west, and would enable her without difficulty to get in much nearer than she was at present to the island. She was seen to be getting up her anchor. The topsails were let fall, and, with her boats ahead, she stood in towards the fort.

"Her captain, finding that he cannot capture us as he expected, intends to attack the fort with his great guns," observed the commander. "He will find, if he attempts to do so, that he has made a still greater mistake than at first. He must be well acquainted, however, with the navigation or he would not venture to bring his frigate in among these reefs."

The men had in the mean time been piped to breakfast, the commander and his two lieutenants alone remaining on the ramparts to watch the proceedings of the frigate. The wind was light, the sea smooth, and she was enabled to thread her way amid the reefs without difficulty.

"Her captain maybe a bold fellow, but he is not a wise one," observed Mr Tarwig. "If it comes on to blow, and I think there is a great probability that it will do so, he will wish himself well out to sea again before he can get there. He seems only to be thinking how he can get near the fort, but if he had kept his eye to windward he would have observed yonder bank of clouds rising above the horizon."

The Spanish flag was now seen to fly out from the peak of the frigate, leaving no doubt as to her nationality. She stood on for a few minutes longer, when her sails were clewed up and her anchor let drop. Though she had now got near enough to reach the fort with her guns, she had to get a spring on her cable before she could bring them to bear upon it.

"Now, my lads, let us show the Spaniards what English gunnery is like," cried the commander, as the men returned to their quarters. "Fire!"

No sooner was the order given than every gun on that side of the fort was discharged at the enemy, with so good an aim that few missed, some of the shots striking her hull, others her rigging. In spite of it, however, the Spaniards managed to get a spring on their cable and to open fire with the whole of their broadside.

"They will not hurt us if they can't take better aim than that," observed Gerald to Nat Kiddle, as the greater number of the enemy's shot flew either on one side or the other of the fort, or buried themselves in the bank below it.

As twelve of the corvette's guns had been brought over to the west side of the fort, they were not much inferior in number to those the Spanish frigate could fire in return; while they were much better served, the English crew firing two guns to the Spaniard's one. Their shot soon began to tell with terrible effect on the enemy; several were seen to go through her bulwarks, while her rigging was much cut up.

The action had continued for nearly an hour, and during all that time not a single person in the fort had been hit. At length the Spaniard appeared to have had enough of it. Her boats were observed ahead, as if about to tow her off the shore. Her cable was cut, and she was seen steering for a passage which the master had lately discovered between the reefs to the north-west.

"She must put her best foot foremost, if she expects to get to sea before the wind which will come out of yonder black cloud catches her," he observed. "Should it hold as it does now she may do it, but if it shifts to the northward or westward she will go ashore as sure as my name is Billhook."

As soon as the frigate's head had come round, her topsails were let fall and sheeted home, and she quickly glided out of the range of the *Champion's* guns. The British crew cheered lustily as they saw the defeat of their enemy.

"We must not be too sure that she will not come back again," observed Mr Tarwig. "The Spaniards do not like the look of the weather; when the squall blows over, they will probably pay us another visit."

"It is a chance if they will be able to do so," observed the master. "See! here comes the wind sooner than I expected. If they can manage to get out between the reefs, they are better navigators than I take them for," he added, as he eagerly watched the retreating enemy.

The wind continued for some time blowing from the same direction as before, enabling the frigate to thread her way between the rocks on either hand. A blast at length reached her. Over she heeled. There was no time for shortening sail; onward she flew at a rapid rate through the water.

"She will get through, after all," observed the commander.

The various spectators almost held their breath, for, though the ship they were watching was an enemy, no one wished her to

meet that fate which it seemed probable would overtake her. Now again she rose almost to an even keel, but not a brace or a sheet was slackened. Already the sea was breaking with fearful violence over a dark reef under her lee, while she was sailing as close as possible to the wind.

"She will not weather it," cried the master. "They are attempting to go about. It's too late, though. She's lost—she's lost!"

At that instant the gale with fresh force struck the devoted ship. Down she heeled, and a sea striking her before she had come round, drove her bodily on the reef. The following seas dashed wildly over her, almost concealing her dark hull from view. For a few moments her masts again came into view, but directly afterwards they fell over one after the other, and the vessel herself appeared to be melting away before the reiterated blows of the fierce waves, which seemed suddenly to rise for the purpose of effecting her destruction.

"We must be ready to offer help to any of the poor fellows who may be washed ashore," exclaimed the commander; "though I fear that few will reach it alive."

Both officers and men were eager to carry out his suggestion. A number of long spars and coils of rope were got ready, and the greater number of the *Champion's* officers and crew set off towards the northern end of the island, the only point where it was at all probable that any of the Spaniards would be able to land. On reaching it, however, the desperate condition of the unfortunate crew was still more clearly seen. To send them help was beyond the power of the English. No boat could possibly live in the sea already running round the reef on which the ship had struck.

Already a large portion of the hull had been knocked to pieces, while the greater number of her crew had been washed into the raging surf and drowned. A few wretches alone clung desperately to the forepart of the ship and the stump of the bowsprit. No assistance could be sent to them. Every instant the wind increased; the seas rolled up more wildly against the wreck, as if eager for their destruction. Still the commander and most of the officers and crew stood watching, on the bare possibility of the wind again shifting and driving some of the hapless Spaniards on the beach.

They waited in vain. The hurricane had only as yet been gathering strength. Suddenly it burst with terrific violence,

which even the seamen on the firm ground could with difficulty face, as it drove masses of spray and sand against them, the roar of the seas almost drowning the commander's voice as he ordered them to retire to the shelter of some rocks a short distance from the shore. On getting under their lee, as they again looked towards where the wreck had been, scarcely a vestige of her remained, nor was one of her hapless crew seen alive. Still, while a hope remained that some poor fellow clinging to a piece of the wreck might be thrown on the beach, a look-out was kept to render him assistance; but some hours passed by, and not a single human being of those who had lately formed the crew of the Spanish frigate could by any possibility have remained alive. The commander ordered the men to return to the fort. The hurricane continued raging with unabated violence for the greater part of the night.

"I say, Nat, it is as well we had not started with Mr Foley," observed Gerald to his brother midshipman. "What would have become of us, I wonder?"

"We should have been in a bad plight, I suppose," answered Nat. "I can't help thinking that the commander was right in not letting us go as soon as we wished."

The stormy weather continued for some time longer. Occasionally the wind ceased, but only again to blow with almost as much violence as before. Mr Foley and the master both acknowledged the commander's wisdom in not allowing them to do as they had desired. The hurricane season must, however, come to an end, for it had apparently already lasted longer than usual, and the young lieutenant began to indulge in the expectation of soon returning to Jamaica.

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## Chapter Nineteen.

**Two vessels appear off the island—One chasing the other—The sternmost supposed to be the Ouzel Galley—Firing heard at night—A calm—The boats put off—A breeze—The pirate escapes—Sound of an engagement heard—Belief that the merchantman has been captured—A boat prepared for a voyage to Jamaica—Just as she is starting, a vessel is seen at anchor inside the reefs—The boats push for her—The stranger fires at them—Is boarded and captured—Gerald's dismay on discovering the "log of the Research, Captain**

**Gerald Tracy"—Dillon found on board as leader of the pirates—He offers to pilot the Research into Tiger harbour—Commander Olding and his whole crew embark with guns, ammunition, and stores—The Research sails for the northward—A canoe, with five people in her, seen.**

One morning Gerald and his constant companion, Nat Kiddle, had gone down just at daybreak to bathe in a pool on the beach, into which no hungry sharks were likely to enter. It was the only place where the commander would allow the men to go into the water, and they naturally preferred getting their swim before the rest of the ship's company. They were somewhat earlier than usual, and after swimming about for some time had landed and were dressing, when Gerald, looking to the north-east, caught sight of a sail just rising above the horizon.

"Hurrah! I do believe she is standing towards the island," he exclaimed, pointing her out to Nat. "She will see our signal and probably heave to, to know what we want. The chances are that she is a friend. No Spanish vessel would be coming from that direction, at all events, with the intention of attacking us. She is probably a man-of-war, or, if a merchantman, she is bound to one of the islands to the southward."

"But she is as likely to be a foreigner as an English vessel," observed Nat; "at all events, she must be greatly out of her course. If bound to Jamaica, she would have kept through the Windward Passage, or if bound to one of the Leeward Islands, she would not have come near this."

The sun, now just rising above the horizon, cast a bright light on the topsails of the stranger, which must have discovered her to the look-out at the signal station, who immediately ran up the colours.

Gerald and Nat were soon after this joined by several other officers who had come down to bathe. Mr Foley, being among the last, had brought his telescope. The north-east trade-wind, which began blowing during the night, was now carrying the stranger steadily along before it. Mr Foley had lent Gerald his glass.

"Why, sir," he exclaimed, as he was looking through it—"It never rains but it pours"—there is another craft of the same rig as the first, under all sail. It appears to me that she is chasing the headmost one."

Crowhurst took the glass, and having glanced through it, agreed that Gerald was right. He then handed it to the master, who observed, "There is no doubt about it. The headmost vessel is a merchantman; by the cut of her canvas, I should say she was English. But the sternmost I can't quite make out; she is probably a French or Spanish privateer. However, as they are coming on at a good rate, we shall know before long. In the mean time I intend to take my dip."

Gerald and Nat continued watching the strangers as they approached. They had got considerably nearer by the time the master came out of the water.

"They must have encountered dark and heavy weather, and got out of their course, or they would not have been so close in to this dangerous coast," he observed. "Lend me the glass again, Foley," he added, turning to the second lieutenant. "Well, I can't make out what she is," he continued. "Her sails have an English cut about them, too. We shall make out her colours before long, for if she is English she is sure to hoist them when she sees ours flying from the flagstaff."

Mr Foley and the rest of the party were as much puzzled as the master. No one felt inclined to leave the spot, even though breakfast-time was approaching.

Gerald felt unusually interested; why, he could scarcely tell, except that he had been the first to discover the strangers. Now he threw himself down on the sand; then he got up and walked about, and again borrowed Mr Foley's telescope.

The course the two vessels were steering would carry them within half a mile of the outer reefs that surrounded the island. The hull of the first could already be distinctly seen. She appeared to be either an armed merchantman or a privateer; but if the latter, it was not likely that she would run from a vessel not much, if at all, superior to her in size.

Nearer and nearer drew the leading vessel. Those on board must have been aware of the dangerous character of the coast. As it was, she was standing closer than, under ordinary circumstances, prudence would have allowed.

"Yes, she is English," exclaimed Gerald, who had been taking a long look at her through the glass. "I can see the people on her deck. They are looking, it seems to me, for some opening in the reefs, but they can find none on this side, and must see the surf breaking over the outer rocks. But what can the other craft be?"



If the first is English, I am sure she must be so, by the look of her hull and the cut of her sails, though I can't make out her flag." His hand began to tremble as he held the glass to his eye—a very unusual thing for him. "Mr Foley, sir," he exclaimed at length, "will you take a look at yonder vessel, and say if you have ever seen her before? It seems to me that I ought to know her."

He handed the glass as he spoke to the lieutenant, who took a long look through it.

"I can scarcely believe it possible; yet, Tracy, she appears to me remarkably like the *Ouzel Galley*," observed Mr Foley.

"That is what I think she is, sir; but how she comes to be chasing another English vessel is more than I can make out."

While the lieutenant was speaking a flash was seen, and a shot flew from the vessel they were looking at towards the one ahead. Another and another followed from her bow-chasers, but the range was a long one, and they fell harmlessly into the water, under the counter of the ship at which they were fired.

"They were well aimed, and had they been fired from longer guns and with better powder, they would have hit their mark," observed Lieutenant Foley.

"It won't be long before the chase has some of those round shot aboard her," observed the master. "The sternmost vessel is gaining on her fast, and unless she can manage to knock away some of the spars of the other, she must be overtaken in a few hours at most."

Gerald had again got hold of the telescope. "I cannot make it out," he exclaimed again and again. "I have just caught sight of her flag. It is black, with the death's head and cross-bones. There is no mistaking her character; she is a pirate, but still I never saw a craft so like the *Ouzel Galley*. She has the same new cloth in her fore-topsail which she had when she last sailed from Port Royal, and a patch in the starboard clew of her main-topgallantsail. Can anything have happened to Owen Massey? He has not turned pirate; of that I am very certain."

"I am afraid, then, Tracy, if that vessel is really the *Ouzel Galley*, she must have been captured by pirates," observed Lieutenant Foley.

"I am dreadfully afraid that such must have been the case, sir," answered Gerald, almost ready to burst into tears. "All I hope is that, though she is wonderfully like the *Ouzel Galley*, she is not her, after all. If she is, poor Owen, his officers and crew must have been murdered. Dear, dear! what will become of Norah when she hears of it?"

The two ships were now passing almost directly in front of the island; indeed, the chase had already got some way to the southward, the pirate ship—for that a pirate she was there could be no doubt—continually firing at her. Gerald walked up and down in a state of painful doubt and anxiety. Nat Kiddle remained with him, though getting very hungry and wishing to go back to the fort for breakfast. Mr Foley, who was almost as much interested as Gerald, was the only officer who remained with him.

Neither of the vessels appeared to have observed the flag flying from the fort; at all events, they took no notice of it. Both were too far off for the guns to reach them, or Commander Olding would not have allowed the pirate to pass unquestioned.

The wind, which had been blowing fresh in the morning, as the day advanced decreased, and by the time the two vessels were about three or four miles to the southward of the island it fell almost to a dead calm. They were still, however, at some distance from each other, but their guns could be heard as they exchanged shots; the headmost vessel firing her stern guns, and the other her bow-chasers, but, as far as could be seen at that distance, without inflicting much damage on the other. No sooner did the commander perceive the state of affairs than, calling his two lieutenants and the master, he proposed attacking the pirate with their three boats.

"If you will allow me, sir, I will gladly take the command," exclaimed Mr Tarwig.

"I intended to have gone myself, but I will yield to your wishes," answered the commander.

Of course, all the other officers were ready to go. The commander selected the master and boatswain to take command of the other two boats. Gerald and Nat Kiddle were eager to accompany them, and greatly to their satisfaction obtained leave, Gerald to accompany the first lieutenant, and Nat the master. By keeping among the reefs, many of which rose considerably above the water, they would be able to get near the pirate without being perceived, and it was hoped,

should the calm continue until nightfall, that they might take her by surprise. This, of course, was most desirable, as she might thus be captured without much bloodshed. No time was to be lost, for the wind could not be depended on, and it might soon again breeze up, when she would quickly get beyond their reach.

The three boats carried altogether thirty hands, armed with firelocks, cutlasses, and pistols. The pirate's crew was in all probability much more numerous, but that was not likely to deter British seamen from attacking them, either by night or day.

Mr Tarwig led his little squadron, threading his way among the rocks to the southward.

Gerald naturally felt an intense interest in the expedition. He was sure that the pirate was the *Ouzel Galley*, and he hoped from some of the prisoners they might take to gain information about Owen Massey.

A considerable portion of the day had been spent before the boats, rounding the island, again came in sight of the two ships. They were still as before cannonading each other at a distance. The boats had met with a strong current, which had considerably impeded their progress. It wanted a little more than an hour to sunset, while they were upward of two miles from the pirate.

"If we wait till dark we shall have a better chance of taking the pirate by surprise, as she will not expect to be attacked by the boats," observed Mr Tarwig to Gerald; "but then, again, we run the risk of losing her altogether, should a breeze spring up.—What do you say, master?" he shouted to Mr Billhook, who was in the boat nearest to him. "Shall we wait till darkness comes on, or pull away at once for the pirates?"

"As you ask me, I venture to say that we had better wait till dark. If the pirates catch sight of us before we are alongside, they may knock one of our boats to pieces, or, for that matter, sink all of them," answered the master.

The boatswain, when asked, agreed with the master. Mr Tarwig therefore decided to wait, under shelter of a high reef of black rocks, which would effectually conceal the boats from the pirate.

Gerald felt greatly disappointed. He had hoped to pull on board at once, and settle the doubts which had been agitating his

mind all the morning. On looking out to the northward, he observed the hitherto glass-like sea rippled over in various directions.

"Do you observe those cat's-paws, sir?" he asked, pointing them out to Mr Tarwig. "If the strangers feel the breeze before we get on board, we shall lose the pirate, and too likely the other vessel will fall into her hands."

"I believe you are right, Tracy. We must give up the idea of surprising the pirate.—We must pull for her at once, master. You board on the starboard bow, Mr Dobbs on the larboard, and I will get on board over the starboard quarter. You will clear a road for yourself along the starboard gangway, master. I will meet you there."

Scarcely had these arrangements been made, the boats still remaining concealed behind the rocks, when the pirate's canvas blew out to the increasing breeze, and she began to glide rapidly away over the smooth water.

"I was afraid so," exclaimed Mr Tarwig. "I am the most unlucky fellow in existence. We shall lose her, after all."

As he spoke the pirate was seen to be running rapidly through the water, the chase at the same time getting the breeze, and, as before, keeping ahead and doing her utmost to escape. On seeing this, Mr Tarwig gave the order to the other boats to pull back.

"I can't make it out, sir," said Gerald, as they were returning to the island; "I feel more certain than ever that the vessel with the black flag is the *Ouzel Galley*. I wish that we could have got on board her, to learn what has become of my friends."

"It is very disappointing, I allow, Tracy," answered the first lieutenant, "but I doubt if we should have been much the wiser. Depend on it, the pirates would not have acknowledged that their craft is the *Ouzel Galley*, and still less how they had disposed of the officers and crew."

"They must have murdered them all," cried Gerald, bending down his head upon the palms of his hands. "I cannot bear to think of it, for I am sure that Owen Massey would not have yielded without a desperate struggle."

"Well, Tracy, we have all our trials to bear. Cheer up, cheer up, matters may not be so bad as you suppose," said Mr Tarwig in a

soothing tone. Rough as was his exterior, he was a true kind-hearted man at bottom.

The two vessels were soon lost to sight in the darkness, which rapidly came on. Still the guns could be heard, showing that the chase had not yet yielded, and was, as before, endeavouring to make her escape. First they were fired only at intervals, as either one or the other could bring her bow or stern-chasers to bear on her antagonist; just as the boats reached the shore the booming sounds came with far greater rapidity, as if both were firing their broadsides.

"The pirate has brought the chase to action," exclaimed Mr Tarwig. "May Heaven protect the right! The merchantman has done her best to escape, and small blame to her. She will now, I doubt not, fight to the last, and may, I hope, beat off the enemy."

The whole party, on landing, stood listening to the sound of the guns, trying to judge how the fight was going. Broadside after broadside was exchanged for the space of nearly half an hour; then suddenly the firing ceased.

"Can the merchantman have beaten off the pirate?" said Gerald to the first lieutenant. "Do you think she has, sir?"

"I much doubt it," was the answer. "What do you say, master?"

"I believe that the pirate has taken the merchantman," replied Mr Billhook. "Those buccaneering fellows will stick to their prey like leeches. They had made up their mind that she would prove a rich prize, and were determined to have her."

Most of the party agreed with the master, and few felt otherwise than sad at the thought of the fate which had probably overtaken the crew of the merchant vessel.

They returned to the fort.

The commander was satisfied that Mr Tarwig had done his best to capture the pirate. He had observed the breeze coming on, and fully expected that she would escape.

The fine weather having now set in, and the stock of provisions running short, the commander agreed to allow his second lieutenant, without further delay, to try and make his way to Jamaica. It had become of double importance that he should get there as soon as possible, both that a man-of-war might be sent

to the relief of the *Champion's* crew, and another despatched to search for the pirate, which was likely to be committing serious depredations on British commerce.

Mr Foley begged that he might be allowed to start the very next morning. He had already obtained from the purser the provisions he expected to require for the voyage, and had selected eight trusty men from among those who had volunteered to accompany him.

Greatly to Gerald's delight, the commander gave him leave to go, Mr Foley having, according to his promise, applied for him.

The pinnacle had been carefully overhauled, and such additions to her fittings as the second lieutenant thought would be necessary had been made. Nothing more, therefore, had now to be done than to put her stores and water on board, and that would not take long, so that she might set off at an early hour the next morning.

Nat Kiddle was greatly disappointed at finding that he was not to go. He again applied, through Mr Foley, for leave, but the commander considered that another officer was not necessary; he was unwilling to risk the safety of more people than were absolutely required. There was but little danger to be apprehended from the weather; the risk was far greater of falling into the hands of the enemy, who would, of course, if they were taken, prevent them from proceeding on their voyage. Should this happen, matters would become serious on the island, though the commander still hoped to be able to maintain the crew for many months to come, with the help of such wild-fowl and fish as could be caught.

Next morning, before daybreak, all hands were roused up, it being arranged that the pinnacle was to start directly there was light enough for her to see her way between the reefs. Those who were to go were first to breakfast, while a party who had been told off for the purpose carried the stores and water down to the pinnacle. She was soon loaded; and a ruddy glow had just appeared in the eastern sky as Mr Foley and his companions stepped on board.

It had again become perfectly calm. Not a breath of air ruffled the smooth surface of the ocean; scarcely a ripple broke on the beach.

"You will have a long pull of it among the reefs," observed the master; "but you will get a breeze, I hope, from the north-east when the sun rises."

The mists of night had begun to clear away, when Mr Foley, looking towards the south-west, exclaimed, "There's a vessel at anchor."

The pinnacle was on the point of shoving off.

"Wait till we see what she is," said the commander, who had come down, as had all the officers and men, to bid farewell to their shipmates.

The sun now quickly rising, shed its rays on the stranger, towards which several telescopes were turned.

"She is the very merchantman we saw yesterday, or I am much mistaken," observed the commander.

"No doubt about it, sir," said Mr Tarwig.

"Foley, you will be saved a voyage in the boat. We must board her without delay, or she may be getting under way, although it seems strange that she should not have noticed our flag," said Commander Olding. "Can she have beaten off the pirate?"

"It looks like it, sir," answered the first lieutenant. "Either the pirate must have escaped or been sent to the bottom."

"We shall soon hear all about it, I hope; and we must get her to take us off," said the commander.

"As the pinnacle is ready, I will pull on board at once, sir, if you will allow me," said Mr Foley.

The commander hesitated for a moment. "We will run no unnecessary risk," he observed. "She may have beaten off the pirate, or she may have become her prize, and if so, it will be safer for all the boats to proceed together well armed."

Some minutes were occupied in unloading the pinnacle, that more men might go in her; and in the mean time the crews of the other boats hurried back to the fort to obtain their arms. Mr Tarwig and the master taking charge of them, as soon as all were ready they shoved off, and pulled as fast as the men could lay their backs to the oars towards the stranger. As they got from under the shelter of some of the higher reefs, which had at

first concealed them, they must have been seen from her deck, as the British ensign was run up at her peak.

"Hurrah! after all, she must have beaten off the pirate!" exclaimed Gerald.

"I am not quite so sure of that," answered Mr Foley. "If she is a prize to the pirates, they would hoist the flag to deceive us, and as they see only three boats, they may hope to beat us off. Don't let us be quite sure that yonder vessel is not in the hands of the pirates," he shouted out to Mr Tarwig, whose boat was astern of the pinnace.

"I agree with you," was the answer. "We will be on our guard."

The first lieutenant, as the senior officer, now took the lead, and the other two boats followed a little more than an oar's length apart. Mr Tarwig's boat carried an ensign, and as he approached the stranger he unshipped the flagstaff and waved it so that it might clearly be seen. The boats had now got within hail of the merchant vessel. The British colours were still hoisted at her peak.

"Who are you?" shouted a man who just then appeared on the poop of the merchant vessel. "Keep off, or we shall fire at you."

"We are British—the officers and men lately belonging to his Majesty's sloop of war *Champion*," answered Mr Foley. "If you are English we are your friends, and we intend to come on board."

"You may be, or you may be buccaneering rascals, and we don't intend to trust you; so stand off, or we shall fire and sink all your boats," shouted the man who had before spoken.

"I repeat that we are British, and you fire at your own risk," answered Mr Tarwig.

"There is no doubt that the pirates have possession of the vessel," observed Mr Foley to Gerald.

The first lieutenant seemed to have arrived at the same conclusion. "Pull ahead, lads!" he cried out; and the men again gave way, the pinnace dashing up on the quarter, and the other two boats on either side.

As they approached the stranger opened her broadsides, and firelocks and swivels were discharged at them; but they were



already so close that the shot flew over their heads, and the next instant the British seamen were scrambling up the sides of the stranger, in spite of the opposition offered them from pikes, firelocks, and pistols. As they threw themselves over the bulwarks, they encountered a savage-looking crew, of whose character there could be no doubt; but, savage as they appeared, the cutlasses of the hardy tars quickly played havoc among them. Some were cut down; others fled to the waist, and leaped below; and several, in desperation, threw themselves overboard. Within a minute the greater part of the deck was in possession of the *Champion's* crew, a small number of pirates alone standing at bay around the mainmast.

"We ask for quarter, and if you give it we will lay down our arms and save further bloodshed," exclaimed one of the party, who appeared to be an officer.

"We give you the quarter you ask, and your lives will be safe till you are brought to a fair trial," answered Mr Tarwig, "but I will not promise you any other terms."

The man consulted with his companions. It was evident that all further resistance would be hopeless, as already the *Champion's* people were in possession of the forecastle and aftermost guns, and could in an instant turn them on the pirates, whom they, besides, considerably outnumbered.

"We trust to your honour and give in, sir," said the former speaker.

"I repeat what I have before said—your lives shall be spared," answered Mr Tarwig.

On which the pirates threw their arms on the deck. They were forthwith pinioned by the victors, and those who had escaped below were brought up and treated in the same manner.

Gerald had remarked the countenance of the man who acted as spokesman for the pirates, and was much struck by it. Could he be O'Harrall? The man, though he had at first stood forward, now tried to conceal himself among his companions. Gerald, on getting closer to him, felt sure that, if not O'Harrall, he was the very man whom he had before mistaken for him, who had been pressed on board the *Champion* and afterwards made his escape from her. This, if he was right, would account for his wish to conceal himself as much as possible from the *Champion's* officers and people, who could scarcely fail, however, to recognise him.

Gerald's attention and that of most of the party was, however, taken up with other matters. The appearance of the ship showed that she had been engaged in a hard-fought action. Her masts and rigging were considerably cut about, though none of her spars appeared to be severely damaged. Her bulwarks in two or three places were knocked in, and there were several shot-holes in her sides, which had been hastily plugged. Splashes of blood here and there on the deck showed that several of the hapless crew had been killed or wounded while defending their ship. The pirates had already obliterated the name on her stern. Why they had done this it was difficult to say, except perhaps, for prudence' sake, it was their custom immediately on capturing a vessel.

While the first lieutenant and the master were superintending the operation of securing the prisoners, Gerald accompanied Mr Foley into the cabin. At the first glance they saw that it had been lately occupied by passengers. In the side berth were hanging up two or three articles of female gear. A book lay open on the table.

In another cabin were a pair of men's shoes; and in a third, evidently that of the master of the ship, were several other articles. Gerald hurried into the latter, for his eye had fallen on a chart hanging against the bulkhead, the appearance of which struck him. The outside was marked in large letters, "Caribbean Sea." He had himself written them. With trembling hand he took it down. Yes! it was a chart belonging to his father. He hurriedly glanced at other articles, several of which he recognised. On a locker was a log-book. He opened it; all doubt was at an end. It was headed "Log of the *Research*, Captain Gerald Tracy." He hurried over the latter pages. There he saw that the ship had met with a long course of bad weather when no observations could be taken. The last entry was—"A strange sail in sight standing towards us. Latitude 23 degrees north, longitude 73 degrees 15 minutes west." Leaving the berth with bloodless lips and pale cheek, he turned to the first page of the book on the table. On it was written—"Norah Tracy."

Mr Foley was startled by the cry of grief and alarm which escaped from Gerald. Unable to speak, Gerald could merely point at the page. Mr Foley in an instant understood it all. Several articles belonging to Norah remained in the cabin. In the other were some books, and several things marked with the name of Dennis O'Brien.

"Then Captain O'Brien must also have been on board," said Mr Foley.

"He was my father's greatest friend; but oh, Mr Foley, what can have become of them? Can they have all been killed by those villainous pirates?" cried Gerald.

"I trust not," answered Norman Foley, though his heart misgave him as he spoke. "Bad as they are, they could not have been barbarous enough to put to death a young girl and two old men like your father and Captain O'Brien; beside which, I doubt whether the pirates would have yielded so quickly if they had been guilty of such a crime. I think we shall find that they were taken on board the pirate vessel, which stood on for their stronghold, leaving the prize to follow as soon as she had repaired damages."

Norman Foley, feeling sincere sympathy for Gerald, offered him all the consolation in his power; but still, knowing the savage character of the pirates, he could not help dreading what might have been the fate of Norah and the old captains. He guessed at once that they had come out in search of the *Ouzel Galley*, which, if she had been captured by the pirates, could not have returned home; and now they themselves had fallen into the power of the miscreant who had taken her. Mr Foley at length persuaded Gerald to return with him on deck, where they found the man whom Gerald had at first taken for O'Harrall, standing with his arms bound behind his back, while Mr Tarwig was questioning him as to how he came to be on board the merchantman. Several of the *Champion's* crew had in the mean time, it appeared, recognised him as Michael Dillon, the man who had deserted from their ship in Port Royal harbour, just before she sailed from thence. Gerald had no longer any doubt about the man, and corroborated what the seamen had said.

"I will not deny that I am Michael Dillon, or that I deserted from your ship. I suppose that I must be prepared to meet the doom of a deserter," he answered boldly; "but you guaranteed my life, sir, till I have been fairly tried; and as I conclude that you intend to keep your word, I need not at present trouble myself about the matter. In the mean time, I can give you valuable information, and render essential service to that young gentleman I see there, Gerald Tracy, and to those he cares for. If you will undertake to let me go free after I have rendered the service I speak of, I will perform it faithfully. If you refuse to promise that my life shall be spared, my lips will be sealed, and you will find no one else to do what I can. You know me for a determined man, and you may tear me to pieces before you get the secret out of me."

"I do not understand you," answered Mr Tarwig. "I must know more about your offer before I make any promise."

"I believe that I can explain what the man means," said Mr Foley, drawing the first lieutenant aside, when he informed him of the discovery that he and Gerald had made in the cabin, and his belief that the pirates had either put Captain Tracy and his daughter to death, or carried them off on board their own ship.

This of course made Mr Tarwig much more ready to listen to Dillon's proposals; still, without Commander Olding's sanction, he could not promise the man his life. He determined, therefore, to send the gig under charge of the master, who would give an account to the commander of what had occurred, and receive his orders. It was necessary to keep the greater part of the *Champion's* people on board to repair the damages the ship had received, and to watch over the prisoners.

"I will not be long absent, depend upon that," said Mr Billhook, as he jumped into the boat and pulled away for the shore.

It was a trying time for poor Gerald. He longed to ascertain from the pirate how his sister and father had been treated; but Dillon and his companions kept their mouths closed, and would not reply to a single question put to them. The men not engaged in watching the pirates were fully employed in more effectually stopping the shot-holes than had before been done, and in knotting and splicing the rigging; thus Gerald had but little time to talk on the the subject which engrossed his thoughts. He just got a few words with Mr Foley, who somewhat relieved his mind by expressing his belief that Norah and his father had been made prisoners and carried on board the pirate. "I think there is another reason for believing that they were not put to death; I suspect that had they been, Dillon would not have offered to give us any information, as he would have known that he could expect no mercy at our hands."

"I wish that the commander would come off," said Gerald. "I have been thinking, sir, that if he would agree to man this ship and go in search of the pirates at once, before returning to Jamaica, we might capture them. They will not know that we have retaken her, and we might thus approach them without being suspected. If you will press the matter on the commander, I hope that he will agree to the plan."

"I feel nearly sure that he will do so," answered Mr Foley. "The idea is a good one; he will probably think of it himself; if not, I

will lead him to it. If the plan occurs to him, so much the better, as of course he will be the more ready to carry it out."

"Thank you, sir, thank you," answered Gerald, his sanguine temperament making all difficulties vanish. He could not indeed bring himself to believe it possible that any beings in the form of men could have had the cruelty to injure his dear young sister and revered father; but then, if Owen had been killed, how sad would be Norah's lot! It would break her heart; of that he was sure.

"Gig coming off, sir," cried the look-out to Mr Tarwig.

In a short time the commander stepped on board. The first lieutenant reported all that had occurred. Commander Olding at once sent for Dillon. Gerald stood by, almost trembling with anxiety as to what course would be taken. The pirate boldly confronted his late commander, and repeated the offer he had already made.

"How can I trust you?" asked Commander Olding.

"You can put a pistol to my head and shoot me, sir, if I do not fulfil my promise," he answered, calmly.

"If you can enable us to recover the master of this ship, and his daughter, and any other of the people who were on board her, I will promise to set you at liberty; but, if you are retaken, you must stand the consequences," said Commander Olding.

"That is the very proposal I was going to make, sir," answered Dillon. "I will undertake to carry this ship alongside the *Ouzel Galley*, which was captured by buccaneers, and is now used by them to go pirating. Her former master and several of his people are alive, for I saw them lately, and if you manage as I will advise you, you will recover them likewise. I confess, sir, that I wish to save my life, and I desire also to make what amends I can for the harm I have done. Will you believe me?"

"I believe you to be a great villain, but I trust you to perform your promise, because it will be to your interest to do so," answered the commander. "Should you prove treacherous, you may depend upon being instantly shot."

"I have not the slightest doubt about that, sir," said Dillon, with an attempt at a laugh. "The sooner you can get this ship ready for sea the better. I was left here to do so, not supposing that you had any boats on shore to come off to us; and from the

number of shot-holes in her hull, it was feared that, unless we could get them securely stopped, should a strong breeze get up she would go to the bottom."

Gerald felt greatly relieved when he heard the commander undertake to carry out Dillon's proposal.

After a short consultation with his lieutenants, Commander Olding despatched all his own boats, and two of the *Research's* which had escaped injury, to bring off the remainder of the officers and crew, with provisions, ammunition, and stores, and four guns to increase the armament of the *Research*. These would make her more than a match for the *Ouzel Galley*. He also directed that the guns left in the fort should be spiked, as too much time would be lost in bringing them down to the beach and throwing them into deep water.

"It will matter little, however, if the Spaniards do take possession of the island, as no one would wish to deprive them of it," he observed to Mr Tarwig.

"I should think not, sir; and, for my part, I hope never to set eyes on it again," was the answer.

The boats made several trips, the whole day being expended in bringing off the stores. The carpenters had in the mean time plugged all the shot-holes, while the boatswain and the men working under him rove fresh braces, fished the damaged spars, and repaired all the standing rigging, so that by the following morning the *Research* was ready to proceed on the expedition.

The commander had had another interview with Michael Dillon, who swore solemnly that neither Captain Tracy nor his daughter, nor the other old captain, had received the slightest injury. He had seen them, he declared, taken on board the *Ouzel Galley*. The young lady's trunks and their valises had also been removed with them.

"And what became of the rest of the officers and crew of the merchantman?" asked the commander.

"They were mostly expended before we boarded," answered Dillon, coolly. "They were knocked on the head by our shot; others who resisted were cut down, and the remainder were taken on board our vessel."

"Are they still on board her?" asked Commander Olding.

"As to that, sir, I cannot say," answered Dillon; "but our captain was in good humour, and may have spared their lives, though I will own it is not always his custom to let his prisoners live. He ordered me, with the hands you found on board, to take charge of the prize, and to follow him as soon as I could get her into seaworthy trim."

Gerald was satisfied that one part of Dillon's statement was correct, as on examining the cabin he could find none of his sister's trunks, nor any in either his father's or Captain O'Brien's cabins, although nothing else had apparently been removed from the ship. What the intention of the pirate was with regard to them, it was impossible to say. Dillon could throw no light on the subject. Mr Foley expressed his hope that the pirate intended to treat them mercifully, and perhaps, he thought, would land them at some place whence they could find their way to Jamaica, or to put them on board any vessel they might fall in with bound to that island.

This idea of Mr Foley's greatly relieved Gerald's mind, and he again began to hope that he should have the happiness of once more seeing them. The commander gave him permission to visit Dillon, so that he might try to ascertain the fate of Owen Massey.

"Though you were among those who dragged me on board the king's ship, I bear you no ill-will," answered Dillon. "I will therefore tell you that I saw Owen Massey, alive and well, not ten days ago. He was then on good terms with the pirate captain, but I cannot answer for what may happen when the young lady appears on the scene. She may perchance prove to be an 'apple of discord.' The captain has an eye for beauty, and from what I have heard, Owen Massey is engaged to marry your fair sister."

"How do you know that?" asked Gerald, surprised at the man's remark.

"We hear all sorts of things, and such an idea was current among our fellows," answered Dillon in a careless tone, which somewhat excited Gerald's anger.

"You have given your promise to try and rescue Owen Massey and any of his companions, as well as my father and sister, and their friend Captain O'Brien," he observed.

"I have promised to do my best to help them, and I intend to keep to that promise," answered Dillon.

Villain as he knew the pirate to be, Gerald was now satisfied that the lives of his father and Norah had been preserved.

Soon after dawn the next morning a light breeze sprang up, which enabled the *Research* to get under way. As soon as she was clear of the reefs, Dillon was brought on deck, and desired to inform the master what course to steer in order to reach the pirate's stronghold. Look-outs were stationed aloft and at each fore-yardarm, that any dangers ahead might be seen and avoided, the commander not trusting alone to Dillon's pilotage.

"With this light wind it will take us three days at least to reach 'Tiger Key;' that is the name the buccaneers have given their stronghold," said Dillon. "It is a place no one, even when looking for it, would be likely to find, unless he knew the landmarks well, or came upon it by chance, and they will not thank me for leading you to it. I must trust, sir, to your not only sparing my life, but protecting me afterwards, for if I fall into their hands they will murder me to a certainty."

These remarks were addressed to Mr Tarwig, to whom the pirate seemed more inclined to be communicative than to any one else.

"What makes you so ready to deliver your late companions into our hands?" asked the first lieutenant. "I thought that buccaneers were always faithful to each other, although at war with the rest of the world."

"In the first place, sir, I wish to save my life—that would be sufficient reason for what I have undertaken," answered the pirate; "and, then," he added, a dark scowl coming over his countenance, "I have sworn vengeance against those who have offended me. I had a quarrel with the captain, whom, though I am his equal, I was ready to serve. He treated me with contempt, and refused to trust me. However, it is a long story, and I will not trouble you with it now. What I say will convince you that I intend to be faithful, and that it will not be my fault if you fail to capture the pirate and his followers."

"And who is this buccaneering captain of whom we have heard so much of late years?" asked Mr Tarwig.

"He goes under different names, sir; and, although I may happen to know his right one, you will excuse me if I decline to tell it," answered Dillon, the dark frown still resting on his brow as he spoke.—"His present followers know him as Manuel



Bermudez; but he has not a drop of Spanish blood in his veins, I can answer for that."

What Dillon said convinced Mr Tarwig that he could be trusted in carrying out their project. It was arranged that on approaching Tiger harbour he should appear to have the command of the ship, and that only as many men as had been left on board by the pirates should be seen on deck, all of them dressed as the pirate crew had been, and that the remainder should lie down concealed under the bulwarks, or remain below ready to spring up at a moment's notice. Commander Olding intended, on entering the harbour, to run up alongside the *Ouzel Galley* and capture her, and then to turn his guns on the people on shore should any resistance be offered. Dillon assured him that no forts existed on shore for the defence of the harbour, the pirates trusting entirely to the intricacy of its navigation.

The *Research* stood on for a couple of days more, close-hauled, frequently having to tack to avoid the rocks and reefs to the westward. Without the greatest possible care she might easily have shared the fate of the *Champion*. As she got to the northward the difficulties of the navigation increased. Dillon, however, proved himself to be an able pilot. He smiled as he saw the pistol which one of the warrant officers held constantly at his head, as if he considered the precaution a very unnecessary one.

"Nobody desires to see the *Research* safe inside Tiger harbour more eagerly than I do," he observed. "Should the ship strike on a reef, it will not be my fault."

"A sail on the weather-bow!" shouted the look-out from aloft.

"What is she like?" asked Mr Foley, who had charge of the watch.

"A small boat or canoe under sail, sir," was the answer.

Gerald, who was on deck, was sent by Mr Foley with a spy-glass aloft to take a look at the boat. "If she steers as she is now doing she will pass, I take it, a couple of miles from us, sir," he cried out.

The commander, who just then came on deck, upon hearing this, ordered the ship to be put about to cut off the boat. At the same time the colours were hoisted, so that should the people in the boat be English, they might know that the ship was a friend. A considerable amount of curiosity was excited as to

what a small boat could be about in these little-frequented seas, and all the glasses on board were turned towards her. As she had now altered her course and was standing towards the ship, she was rapidly neared, and five people were counted on board her.

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## **Chapter Twenty.**

**The Ouzel Galley overtaken by a hurricane—Driven towards the coast of Cuba—The mainmast struck by lightning—Fire—Owen extinguishes the flames—Close in with the coast—A stranger seen—A mutiny on board—Chased—The Ouzel Galley boarded by pirates—O'Harrall recognises Owen, and spares his and his followers' lives—The Ouzel Galley carried to the pirate's stronghold—Owen and his companions imprisoned in the store—Old Mammy keeps strict watch—O'Harrall's changeable temper—Plans for escaping—Months pass by—Fresh guards set to watch them—Hear of the loss of the Eagle—The pirates still in the Ouzel Galley—Owen and his followers escape in a canoe—See the Ouzel Galley—Avoid her—Get on board the Research.**

When Owen Massey sailed from Montego Bay, he had hoped to escape all enemies and make a rapid passage to Waterford; but those hopes were doomed to disappointment. Scarcely had the *Ouzel Galley* passed Bellevue than signs of a coming gale from the westward were perceptible. So partial, however, are the disturbances of the atmosphere in that region, that Owen kept the ship under all sail in the expectation of being able to run out of it before it reached him. Still he was too good a seaman not to take the necessary precautions. All hands remained on deck, while he continually turned his eye to windward, to be ready to shorten sail immediately it became absolutely necessary. As the day drew on, the blue mountains of Jamaica grew less and less distinct. Should the gale overtake him, it was of the greatest importance to gain a good offing, for in mid-channel he would not have much to fear. The *Ouzel Galley* was a stout ship, and, if well handled, might brave the fiercest hurricane. The log was hove. She was making between eight and nine knots, a speed she could not often exceed. The wind was well aft and all her sails filled. His hopes of escaping the gale continued. After some time, however, he saw that the dark bank of clouds which had long been visible above the horizon was rising more rapidly than

at first. Then masses detached themselves and came rushing across the sky, breaking into numerous portions, like the riflemen of an advancing force feeling their way through an enemy's country. Still he carried on to the last moment.

"In studding-sails!" he suddenly shouted. "Let fly royal and topgallant sheets!"

The first-named sails were speedily hauled down. The crew then hurried aloft to hand the others, which were fluttering in the wind.

"Three reefs in the topsails!" was the next order given.

A strong crew alone could have performed the operation as rapidly as it was got through. The courses were next brailed up. Still the ship flew on as fast as previously before the rising gale.

"Bedad! and it's my belafe that we're going to have old Harry Cane on board," observed Dan to Pompey.

"You not far wrong dere," answered the black. "Cappen Massey know what him about. I'se sooner be 'board *Ouzel Galley* when a hurricane blowing dan on board many a king's ship, when de cappen tink he berry wise an' carry on till de masts go ober de side."

"Troth! an' ye're right there, Pompey, my jewel! We'll be afther running out of the harricane, and sorra the worse will we be."

The confidence felt by the young master's two faithful followers was shared by most of the crew.

The *Ouzel Galley* behaved admirably; she ran on before the fast-rising seas roaring up alongside. The wind whistled in her rigging, and bright flashes of lightning darted from the black clouds now gathering thickly overhead.

As the night drew on the wind increased, and it was now blowing a regular hurricane; still, as long as there was plenty of sea room, no danger was to be apprehended, unless indeed, the ship should be struck by lightning, against which no skill or seamanship could guard. No one on board could hide from himself that such might possibly occur, as the flashes succeeded each other with still greater and greater rapidity, the lightning frequently running along the yards, now playing round the mast-heads, now darting over the foaming seas in snake-like forms. In the intervals between the flashes, so dense was the

darkness that the eye failed to see half across the deck, and had another vessel been overtaken, the *Ouzel Galley* might have run her down before she could have been perceived. The canvas had been reduced to a single close-reefed fore-topsail, which so tugged and strained at the mast that every instant it seemed as if about to be torn out of the bolt-ropes. As long as the wind blew from the westward or south-west, the ship could run on with safety till she had got to the eastward of Cuba, and before that time there was every probability of the hurricane ceasing. Her only safe course was to keep directly before it, for if she were to bring the seas abeam, they would to a certainty sweep over her and carry everything before them.

Owen remained on deck, holding on to a stanchion, while two of his stoutest hands were at the wheel. For some hours he had stood at his post, feeling no apprehension of danger, when towards the end of the middle watch the wind shifted suddenly to the southward, blowing with even greater fury than before. The helm was put a-starboard, and the *Ouzel Galley* was now running towards the dangerous coast of Cuba. There was no help for it; but Owen expected, as is often the case during a hurricane, that ere long the wind would again shift.

For a short time there was a comparative lull, and all on board hoped that the gale was breaking.

"We shall be able, I am thinking, sir, to make sail and haul off from the shore by morning," observed his first mate. "It is well not to get nearer the Cuba coast than we can help. There are not a few low keys and sandbanks to bring us up; or one of the enemy's cruisers may be spying us, and it would give us a job to get away from her."

"As to that, I am not much afraid," answered Owen. "I shall be thankful when the hurricane is over and we can stand on our course."

The hurricane, however, was not over. Again the wind struck the ship with tremendous force, the lightning, as before, playing round her, crackling and hissing as it touched the wildly tossing waves. Suddenly there came a frightful crash. The splinters flew on every side, and the tall mainmast, tottering for a moment, fell over the side, breaking away the bulwarks—either it or the lightning which had riven it killing three men who were standing near. In its fall it carried away the mizen-mast.

"Fire! fire! the ship is on fire!" shouted several voices. "Put it out, then, my lads, and clear away the wreck," cried Owen,

seizing an axe which hung inside the companion-hatch, he himself setting the example, which was followed by his mates and several others.

While one party was engaged in cutting away the shrouds and running rigging, so as to let the blazing mass fall into the water, another was handing up buckets and throwing water over the stump of the mainmast. The wreck of the mast being got rid of, the flames on deck were soon extinguished; but a cry came from below that the heel of the mast was on fire.

"We shall soon put that out, lads," cried Owen, with all the calmness he could assume; and leading the way into the hold, bucket in hand, he forced a passage through a dense mass of smoke until he reached the seat of the fire.

There he took his post, in spite of the heat and the clouds of smoke surrounding him. As the buckets were handed to him, he hove the water over the burning wood. Bravely he fought the flames, and at length was able to shout to his crew that they were extinguished. Having assured himself of this fact, he hurried on deck. The foremast stood, carrying the closely reefed fore-topsail.

"It can't be helped," he observed to his first officer. "As soon as the weather moderates, we must set up fresh backstays to the mast and try and rig jury-masts, which will carry us back to Port Royal."

"I shall be thankful if we can keep clear of the land and escape the enemy's cruisers we were talking about, sir," answered the mate, who, though a steady man, had less spirit than the master.

When daylight broke, the outlines of the lofty mountains of Cuba were seen ahead, but still indistinct, and, to the ordinary eye, not to be distinguished from a bank of clouds. Still the ship drove before the hurricane; but, as the sun rose, the wind began greatly to decrease, although it still blew with too much force, and the sea ran too high, to allow the ship to be brought on a wind. She had, therefore, still to run before it, unwilling as those on board were to approach the dangerous coast. The sun rose as the land became more and more distinct, but still the sea was too high to allow of jury-masts being set up. In the mean time the spars were got ready to do so as soon as possible.

As the wind decreased the sea went down, but by the time the ship could be brought on a wind she was within sight of the coast, and, owing to the eccentric course she had steered, it was difficult to say exactly whereabouts she was, although Owen calculated that she was somewhat to the westward of Cumberland harbour.

"We can only hope, sir, that no Spanish man-of-war or privateersman lies anywhere inside of us, and that we shall be able to get a good offing again before we are sighted by an enemy," observed the mate.

"I hope so," answered Owen. "What we now have to do is to set up our jury-masts and make sail as soon as we can."

All hands were engaged in this important operation. While it was going on, Owen occasionally took an anxious glance through his telescope towards the land. As he did so, his eye caught sight of a sail, on which the bright rays of the sun fell, standing out from it, and he soon saw that she was a large ship. A friend was not to be expected from that quarter! He made no remark, however, as all hands were working as fast as they could.

His mate at last saw the stranger.

"What do you think of her?" asked Owen.

"No good, sir," was the answer.

"I fear not," said Owen. "All we can pray for is that a calm may come on, till we can make sail on the ship, and then we may get away from her during the night."

"She will be up to us long before that, sir," observed the mate, shaking his head.

"At all events, in the mean time we will do our best," remarked Owen; and, without taking further notice of the stranger, he continued working away with his officers and men.

At length her jury-masts were got up, with yards across, and the main-topgallantsail, and such other sails as they could carry were set on them.

By this time the stranger had approached too near to escape the notice of any one on deck. Of course her character was suspected.

"You see her," cried Owen. "Now, my lads, I hope you will stick by me; and if she proves to be an enemy, of which I have no doubt, we will try and beat her off."

Several of the crew answered with a hearty "Ay, ay, sir!" but others were silent; among them were the men who had lately come on board in Kingston harbour.

The wind was light, and the *Ouzel Galley* made but little way through the water. The stranger was now seen to be a ship of her own size, if not larger. Owen ordered the colours to be hoisted, but none were shown in return by the stranger. Again and again he took a glance at her through his telescope, and at last he called his first mate.

"Have you ever seen that ship before?" he asked.

"I have been thinking that I have, sir, and, if I mistake not, she is the very craft which so nearly captured us on our passage out."

"I am afraid so," said Owen. "The more reason we should try to beat her off; and, please Heaven, we will do so."

"I will stand by you, sir; and so, I hope, will most of the men," answered the mate; "but I don't like the looks of some of the new hands, and least of all of that man Routh."

As he spoke, he caught sight of Routh ascending to the mast-head, from which he was seen to wave a flag, supposing, apparently, that he was not perceived from the deck.

"We must seize that fellow," cried Owen. "He did not make that signal without a cause."

"Ay, ay, sir," answered the mate. "I will soon learn his object;" and, calling Dan Connor and Pompey, he went forward to secure Routh as he descended on deck.

Just then Owen observed a smaller flag hoisted at the mast-head of the stranger; then Routh, instead of at once coming on deck, ran out to the end of the fore-yardarm, from whence he dropped something into the water, apparently the very flag he had just waved. He then deliberately returned to the foretop, and after stopping there for some seconds, and looking at the stranger, he slowly descended the fore-rigging. As he did so, he caught sight of the mate, with Dan and Pompey, waiting for him, when, suspecting their object, he sprang up again, and

shouted to several men who were standing forward. They were those of whom the mate had just before spoken as likely to become traitors. With threatening gestures, they at once advanced towards the mate.

"If you interfere with Routh it will prove the worse for you," exclaimed John Green, who acted as their spokesman.

The mate's first impulse was to seize the fellow, but his courage failed him. "You will hear what the captain has to say to this," he answered, and began to retreat, Dan and Pompey unwillingly following him.

Routh, on this, took the opportunity of slipping down on deck and joining his companions.

Owen, who had seen what had been taking place, at once went into the cabin and got his own pistols and cutlass, directing the second mate to arm the rest of the men. Still, notwithstanding the mutiny on board, he kept to his determination of fighting the ship till the last. Fortunately, the mutineers had no arms, and before they were aware of it all the true men had got their weapons.

"Now, my lads," cried Owen, "if you refuse to do your duty, you must take the consequences. Go to your guns! The first man I see flinch from them I will shoot through the head."

This threat seemed to produce its effect, and even Routh obeyed.

The stranger was now rapidly overhauling the *Ouzel Galley*, which, hauled on a wind, was standing to the south-east. Owen had got his guns ready for action; the crew were at quarters. Crippled as the *Ouzel Galley* was, he could only hope to succeed by speedily knocking away the enemy's masts, or otherwise seriously damaging her; for, unable to manoeuvre his ship except very slowly, he could not prevent his opponent from taking up any position which might be chosen, either ahead or astern, and raking him at leisure—or she might at once run him aboard and overwhelm him with superior numbers. Still he bravely determined to fight till the last.

He anxiously watched the stranger to judge what she would do. She had at first set all the canvas she could carry, but as she came towards the *Ouzel Galley* she shortened sail, gradually also edging away to leeward, apparently for the purpose of preventing Owen from making his escape. The enemy had as



yet not fired a shot. Directly, however, that Owen could get his guns to bear he fired them at her; not without some effect, but that did not make her alter her course.

"She intends to board us, sir," cried the mate, who had been watching the stranger.

"You are right, but we will give her a broadside or two first, and maybe make her alter her purpose," answered Owen. "Fire, my lads! and run in the guns and load again as fast as you can."

The men stationed at the aftermost guns obeyed the order, but the shot from those forward, manned by the new hands, flew wide of their mark; it might have been from their ignorance of gunnery, but, considering their late conduct, it was too probable that it was done on purpose. The rest of the crew took good aim, and then running in their guns, reloaded them.

"Here she comes!" cried the mate. "She will be aboard us presently."

As he spoke the stranger ranged up alongside, her decks covered with men. Four of the *Ouzel Galley's* guns alone went off, and ere they could be again loaded the stranger was alongside, throwing grappling-irons on board to secure her prey.

"Cut them clear!" cried Owen. "Resist boarders!"

As he issued the order, the pirates, who stood ready in the main and fore-rigging of their ship, leaped down on the deck of the *Ouzel Galley*, when, with a feeling almost of despair, Owen saw Routh and several of his crew join them. Still, rallying his men round him, he resolved, if possible, to drive back the pirates in spite of their numbers. Firing his pistols, he gallantly attacked them, cutlass in hand, seconded by his mates and several of his men, Dan and Pompey fighting with undaunted courage.

"On, my lads! on!" he shouted; and so sturdily did he and his companions attack the pirates, that they drove the greater number back to their own ship. This, success encouraged his men, and once more they began to hope that they should get free.

At this moment, a voice was heard from among the pirates cheering them on, and a fresh party leaping down on the deck of the *Ouzel Galley* bore all before them. In vain Owen and his faithful followers, Dan and Pompey and others, fought with the

most determined bravery; they were soon overwhelmed by far superior numbers. Owen's foot slipping, he fell upon the deck. At that moment one of his assailants raised his cutlass, and was on the point of giving him a death blow, when the leader of the pirates interposed his own weapon.

"Let him live!" he exclaimed. "He is one I am bound to protect; and these fellows with him—we will spare their lives. You hear?" he shouted, turning to Dan and Pompey; "if you wish to have a longer spell of life, drop your cutlasses. The ship is ours; give in, or in another moment you will be among those who lie there on the deck."

"Faix, thin, yer honour, if yer are going to spare the captin's life, I have no objection at all at all to live a little longer," answered Dan—still, however, keeping his cutlass ready to defend himself.

"And I'se too glad to 'cept your offer!" cried Pompey, who also wisely stood on his guard.

"Let no one touch them, or the boy there," said the pirate, pointing to Tim Maloney, who, though he had done his part, had now got behind Dan and Pompey.

A dizziness had come over Owen's eyes as he fell, but now looking up, he caught sight of the pirate gazing at him. Their eyes met.

"Owen Massey," said the pirate, taking his hand; "I know you and remember my promise." He pointed to the ring which Owen wore upon his finger.

"O'Harrall!" exclaimed Owen. "Is it possible that you are the leader of such men?"

"It is fortunate for you that I am their leader," answered O'Harrall, helping Owen to rise. "Were I not, you would have shared the fate of your crew. I will protect you and the three survivors, although it will be no easy matter to do so."

"I accept your offer, and trust that you will keep your word regarding my men," answered Owen.

More he could not say, for his feelings overpowered him, as looking round he saw his two mates stretched dead on the deck, and the rest of the men who had remained faithful to him weltering in their blood not far off. Though bruised from his fall,

he was not otherwise hurt, nor were either Dan, Pompey, or Tim wounded.

"The safest place for you and these three men is your own cabin," said O'Harrall. "Go in there with them, and I will place a sentry at the door. I cannot trust my own people, and still less the fellows who turned traitors to you."

Owen, fully agreeing that O'Harrall was right, followed his advice. As he was going below, he saw Routh approaching O'Harrall. After gazing at each other for a moment, they shook hands. Owen, on seeing the two together, no longer wondered that he should have mistaken one for the other, so great was the likeness.

"They must be brothers, and the man who calls himself Routh is the younger, of whom my mother has spoken to me," he thought.

Thankful to have escaped with his life, more for his mother's and Norah's sake than his own, Owen Massey, sad and almost broken-hearted at the loss of the ship, threw himself into a chair in his cabin, Dan, Pompey, and Tim standing round him.

"Cheer up, Cappen Massey; tings when dey come to de wust begin to mend, dey say," observed Pompey, anxious to console his beloved master. "As de pirate sabe our lives, he set us free p'raps, and den we go back to Jamacee and you get oder ship."

"Bad luck to the pirates for taking us, though!" exclaimed Dan. "It's my belafe we should have bate them off, if it hadn't been for that thafe of the world, Routh, and the other villains. By the powers! if I ever get the chance, I'll make him repint his treachery; but as you have escaped, captin dear, the rest matthers but little to my mind in comparison."

Owen thanked his followers for their kind expressions towards him, but he severely felt the loss of his mates and the rest of the crew, besides that of his ship, while he could not look forward with much hope to the future. He was very doubtful, also, how O'Harrall might treat him. He knew too well the savage and lawless character of the man, who, though he had saved his life, might at any moment, in a fit of passion, turn upon him and his other prisoners; and although he might withhold his hand from killing him, would without compunction put the others to death. For the present, however, their lives were probably safe; and Owen resolved to follow the pirate's advice and remain in the cabin until summoned to leave it. He

could judge by the sounds on deck that the pirate crew were engaged in repairing the damages the *Ouzel Galley* had received. After this he heard the order given to make sail, and he found by a small compass in the cabin that the ship was standing to the eastward.

After some time O'Harrall himself entered the cabin. "I was compelled to take your ship, Massey," he said, "and now I have got her I am equally obliged to keep her; but I repeat to you that your life and the lives of the two Irishmen are safe, provided you remain below. The black runs no risk from my people, and he may go on deck and make himself useful. He will act as your steward, and bring you your meals while you remain on board. I intend to take command of the *Ouzel Galley*, so that I shall be able to look after you till you are put on shore."

Owen was not inclined, it may be supposed, for conversation; while O'Harrall had matters to attend to on deck. He therefore, having sent Pompey there, soon left the cabin. After some time the black returned with a substantial meal, which he had prepared by O'Harrall's orders.

Night came on, and the ship still continued her course. Owen's only hope was that she might be sighted by some man-of-war and recaptured. This hope, however, was but slight. The pirates were likely to be wary, and they would take care to keep away from any strange sail. The wind was light, and the *Ouzel Galley* made but slow progress. Owen recollected that the pirate ship was in company. O'Harrall, when he came occasionally into the cabin, showed no inclination to give him any information.

Another and another day went by, and Owen began to lose all hope of being retaken; still, as long as the ship was at sea, there was a probability of this occurring.

"Suppose we are chased—won't the pirates be after cutting all our throats, sure?" suggested Tim, who was more out of spirits than either Owen or Dan.

Owen could not help thinking that such might be the case; yet if the *Ouzel Galley* were to be recaptured, notwithstanding the injury O'Harrall had done him, he determined to plead for his life. Not that he could perceive a single good quality in the man, except his undaunted bravery, and he himself felt grateful to him for saving his his life, though it was done in return for his twice having saved O'Harrall's.

On the morning of the fourth day the wind freshened, and the ship made better progress. Towards evening, Owen and his fellow-prisoners could distinctly hear the roar of breakers. Occasionally the loud voice of O'Harrall, issuing his orders, reached their ears. The ship rose and fell several times as if passing over a bar, then Owen felt that she was gliding on through perfectly calm water. He heard the orders for shortening sail; still she continued her course for some distance, till the anchor was dropped and all movement ceased. He could have no doubt that she had entered a harbour, the rendezvous of the pirates, where they would consider themselves safe from attack, and that his chances of escape were now likely to be small indeed. The *Ouzel Galley* had been some time at anchor when O'Harrall entered the cabin.

"I have made arrangements for you and the two Irishmen to live on shore," he said; "the black can attend on you, and you must make the best of the circumstances in which you are placed. As to your escaping, that is out of the question, so I will not go through the ceremony of taking your word that you will not make the attempt. As to the future, I can say nothing. If I can prudently at any time set you at liberty, I will do so, although when that may be is more than I can at present say. You are at liberty to take with you your clothing, and any books you may require for your amusement. I have obtained that favour for you. According to our laws, every article on board the ship is public property, and must be divided accordingly. I will accompany you on shore as soon as it is dark. In the mean time, you can employ yourself in putting your things together, and taking farewell of the old ship. I little supposed when I was before on board that I should one day find myself her commander."

O'Harrall spoke the last sentence in a somewhat ironical tone, and, without further remark, left the cabin. It was already dark, and Dan had lighted the lamp which hung from the deck above when O'Harrall returned.

"I will take you and your followers on shore now, Captain Massey," he said. "Ask no questions, and take no notice of anything you see. While I am with you, you are safe; obey my directions and you will continue so, but I cannot answer for the conduct of the people hereabouts if you venture anywhere by yourself. Your men will carry your chest and their own bags."

Pompey had entered with O'Harrall, to assist Dan and Tim; taking up Owen's chest, they followed him and the pirate on deck. Not a man was to be seen on board; the ship appeared to

be deserted. A boat was alongside, with two people in her. The Irishmen and Pompey lowered down the chest.

"Come, Massey, bid farewell to the old craft," said O'Harrall, in the same tone in which he had before spoken; and he went down the side of the ship into the boat.

Owen and his three companions descended after him.

"Shove off," said the pirate in Spanish; and the crew, obeying, began to pull towards the low shore, which could dimly be distinguished through the obscurity. A few trees rose above it, and here and there at intervals twinkling lights could be perceived, as if proceeding from the huts of the inhabitants.

Owen, as he glanced round, saw at once that the ship lay in the centre of a lagoon of some size, the shores of which were in most parts low; but to the southward, the direction of which he knew by the stars shining brightly from out of the unclouded sky, the ground rose to a considerable height, with what appeared to be cliffs directly above the water. Near the *Ouzel Galley* lay another large ship, and he guessed that she was the one which had captured her, but he wisely forebore to ask questions.

"You see the sort of place you are in," said O'Harrall. "It is not one from which you could easily escape, however much you might desire it; but let me advise you not to make the attempt. You would to a certainty be retaken, and I could not save you from the fate to which you would be doomed. I have already shown that I desire to serve you. I could not help capturing the *Ouzel Galley*, for the signal made by one of your crew showed my people that she was a prize worth taking; although I knew her at once, and guessed that you must be in command, I could not help myself."

Owen made no reply to these remarks. Bad as a man may be, he generally endeavours to offer some excuse to those he respects. But little further conversation passed till the boat reached the beach. O'Harrall then gave some orders to the men in her, who, as soon as he and his companions had landed, pulled away. The black and the two seamen then, shouldering the chests, followed O'Harrall and Owen, the former conducting them directly inland, passing some groves of cocoa-nut and other trees, and avoiding any of the huts which were scattered about here and there. After they had walked nearly a quarter of a mile, a largish building, which might have been a barn or store, met their gaze, a light gleaming from one end of it.

"Open the door, Mammy; here are your guests," said O'Harrall, and immediately an old black woman appeared, with a lamp in her hand, which she held up to enable her to scrutinise her visitors.

"All right, massa cappen," she said. "Glad to see the gen'lemen. I'se take good care ob dem, neber fear."

"Go in, Captain Massey," said the pirate. "Mammy will be your hostess while you remain with us."

Owen and the rest entered the hut. He saw that the room in which they found themselves occupied only a part of the ground-floor of the building, being divided off from the larger portion by a wooden partition or bulkhead. On looking round he saw a ladder, which led through a trap-door to the floor above.

"Your lodging is to be up there," said O'Harrall, pointing to it. "It may remind you of a place in which you once gave me shelter. I have not forgotten that. I wish that I could afford you better accommodation; however, it is sufficiently large and airy, and you will, I hope, find it as comfortable as you desire. Mammy will supply you with food, which your black fellow can cook, with her assistance. The only charge I have to give you is not to leave the house until you hear from me. A tackle hangs from the beam overhead. Let your men get your chest and their bags up at once; so that, should any one come to pay Mammy a visit, it will not be suspected that you are here. You see, I took precautions for your safety, and they were not unnecessary. Some of the gentry who inhabit this island would not scruple to stick a knife into you, if they thought that you were prying into their proceedings."

"I will follow your directions," answered Owen, telling Dan to go up the ladder and lower the tackle.

They at once hoisted the chest and bags to the floor above. A second lamp, which the old woman supplied, showed them a large room which extended the whole length of the building. At one end was a cabin table, with some chairs and a cot; at the other several bunks and seamen's chests. There were numerous bales and boxes placed against the walls, on which also hung a variety of arms: firelocks, blunderbusses, and pistols, cutlasses and sabres, apparently the spoils of various captured vessels.

"You see that I am not afraid of trusting you with weapons," said O'Harrall who had followed his prisoners into the place, and he pointed to the arms. "If by chance you are attacked you are

welcome to defend yourselves, but I do not expect that that will happen. This building is my property; no one will come here, if you keep yourselves quiet. I have directed Mammy to get some supper for you, and the black will bring it up shortly. Now, good night. I have matters to attend to on board the *Eagle*, and it may be some days before I again visit you."

"I have to thank you for the care you take of us," answered Owen. He could not bring himself to offer his hand to the pirate, nor did the latter apparently expect him to do so.

Without further remark O'Harrall descended the ladder, and, after exchanging a few words with the old negress, took his departure.

Owen paced up and down the room, meditating on the strange position in which he was placed; while Dan and Tim sat on two chests at the further end, feeling very disconsolate. Pompey, meantime, could be heard below, chattering away to the old woman while he assisted her in preparing supper. In a short time he appeared, with a tray on his head, up the ladder.

"Cheer up, cappen," he said. "She not so bad ole woman, me tink, and p'raps tings go better dan we suppose. At all events, she make berry good fricassee." And he pointed to the dish of fowl prepared as he had described, which looked very tempting.

Notwithstanding their misfortune, Owen and his companions managed to discuss the viands placed before them with tolerable appetites, the two seamen and Pompey especially doing their part. At length Owen threw himself into his cot, and endeavoured to forget his sorrows in sleep. His followers, having secured the trap-door, imitated his example.

The next day passed without a visit from O'Harrall. Pompey alone went below to obtain food, Owen thinking it prudent to follow the pirate's advice. He spent the time walking up and down the room, occasionally trying to calm his mind by reading; so that he found the hours pass away more rapidly than did Dan or Tim, who were ignorant of the art. It occurred to him at last that he might amuse them as well as himself, and as several of his books were of an interesting character, he read aloud to them, greatly to their delight.

"Faix, captin, I niver knew there was sich beautiful things in books," exclaimed Dan, who had not in his life been read to before; "and I'll jist make bould to axe you to tache Tim and



meself, and you'll find us apt scholars, if you don't think us too simple to learn."

"With all my heart," answered Owen; and thenceforth he devoted several hours during the day to the instruction of Dan and the lad, who, giving their minds to the task, rapidly learnt to read.

One day passed very much like another. A month went by without O'Harrall's making his appearance, so that Owen concluded that he had again sailed. Pompey could obtain no information. Mammy, he said, had made him promise not to go outside the door, and had threatened him with fearful punishment if he ventured to do so. There were windows to the room, but they were high up and strongly barred. Dan and Tim climbed up to them, but a grove of trees intervened between the house and the harbour, so that nothing could be seen of the vessels, while on the other side was a wide extent of sandy country, with the blue ocean in the distance.

Owen was naturally getting very weary of his captivity. What the pirate's object was in keeping him a prisoner, it was difficult to understand. He could scarcely intend to keep him a captive for life; but when would he give him his liberty was the question. Owen determined to ask him as soon as he returned. He naturally often thought over some plan for making his escape, but, unacquainted as he was with the surrounding country, and without means of gaining any knowledge of it, it was impossible to decide what to do. Dan and Tim often talked over the subject with Pompey, who, however, declared that they were so narrowly watched by the old woman that it would be impossible to succeed.

"Mammy always sleep wid one eye open and ear wide-awake," he observed. "Suppose we get out and she not raise a hullabaloo, where we go to? Wait a bit, and den we see what we do."

Pompey, in truth, was no more able than the rest of the party to devise any feasible plan for getting away.

Imprisonment is galling to all men, but it was especially so to Owen, who had hoped to make a successful voyage, and to marry his beloved Norah at the end of it. He had no means of communicating with her, and she, naturally supposing him to be lost, would be plunged in grief. He felt that he could better bear his hard fate if he could but let her know that he was alive. He might some day regain his liberty. He had no doubts about her

constancy; he was sure that she would be faithful to him; and although her friends might try to induce her to marry, he felt confident that she would not do that.

At length, one evening when Pompey was sitting with his shipmates in the loft, voices were heard below.

"Hi, dat de pirate cappen," he exclaimed; and Owen prepared himself for an interview with O'Harrall.

Before long the pirate came up the ladder. A dark scowl was on his brow. Owen rose to receive him. O'Harrall advanced and threw himself into a chair, scarcely glancing at the men as he passed them.

"I am glad to see you, Captain O'Harrall, for I hope that you will allow me and my companions to quit this place, and we shall be ready to enter into any arrangement you may dictate not to betray its position," said Owen.

"I am not in the habit of placing myself in the power of others when I can help it," answered O'Harrall. "Your word may be as good as your bond, but both may be broken. I tell you plainly I intend to keep you prisoners as long as I remain in these seas. Circumstances may induce me to return to Europe, and if so, I may either carry you with me or land you at some island, from whence you may find your way to Jamaica. When that may be I cannot say. In the mean time, you must make up your mind to be content with your lot."

"You might land me, when you next sail from this, at some such place as you speak of without any detriment to yourself," said Owen; and, bethinking him that he would appeal to the pirate's better feelings, he added, "You have deprived me of my vessel and ruined my prospects of advancement. I was engaged to marry a young lady who is sincerely attached to me, and for her sake I plead for my liberty, that I may be able to return to her, or at all events inform her that I am still alive."

"Who is she?" asked O'Harrall, "although I need scarcely put the question."

"Captain Tracy's daughter—you have often seen her," answered Owen.

"I thought so," exclaimed O'Harrall. "You have counted too much on my generosity. I have not only seen her, as you say, but admire her more than any woman I have met, and should I

ever wed I intend to make her my wife. Is it likely, then, that I should allow you to return home and forestall me?"

Owen's heart sank: he could not reply.

"You have but ill pleaded your cause," continued O'Harrall in the cold sarcastic tone in which he often spoke. "You saved my life, and I have preserved yours; more you cannot expect from me. Those men there behaved well to me on board the *Ouzel Galley*, and I therefore could not allow them to be killed. My sense of justice does not go further than that. You and they must make up your minds to remain where you are for an indefinite period. I came to see how you had acted, and if you behave as wisely as you have hitherto done you need not fear being subjected to any further restraint. I will, by-the-by, send you some books for your amusement. You will see by this that I do not wish to treat you with greater severity than is necessary. Now, good evening."

O'Harrall rose as he spoke, and without further remark descended the ladder, drawing the trap after him.

A parcel of books was delivered through Mammy the next day; they consisted chiefly of voyages and travels, and proved a great boon to the prisoners. O'Harrall, however, did not again appear until some weeks after this. He was, when he then came, evidently in a bad humour, his manner being even threatening towards his prisoners. He spoke as if he regretted having spared their lives, exhibiting by the expressions he used his abandoned disposition. Owen knew that his only safe course was not to answer him. He felt that it would be hopeless to attempt to arouse any better or more generous feelings. He, however, was more than ever resolved to try and escape.

Dan proposed, could they ascertain that the pirates had sailed on any expedition, to secure the old woman, make their way down to the harbour during some dark night, and attempt to gain the open sea. Once clear of the island, they might hope to get picked up by some ship, and under their circumstances they might trust even to an enemy, or they might succeed in reaching Jamaica. They must wait, however, until the hurricane season was over, and they might then, even in a canoe, navigate these calm seas without much danger.

Owen thought the plan feasible, although it might prove difficult and dangerous. It could scarcely be hoped that the pirates would leave the harbour unguarded. It might be a hard matter to find a canoe suitable for their object, and they must also

obtain a supply of provisions and water. Mammy's watchful eye would effectually prevent them from doing this, and herein lay their first and chief difficulty.

O'Harrall had now been for some time absent. It struck Owen that perhaps the account he had given of the savage character of the inhabitants was to prevent them from leaving the house, and he resolved to try how Mammy would behave should they attempt to go out.

Pompey undertook to try and persuade her to allow them to take some exercise, as their health was suffering from their long confinement. He got her, therefore, one day into conversation, when she appeared to be in a better humour than usual, and after some time he made a signal to Tim, who was on the watch, to come down. Owen and Dan followed. Then, telling her that they would go out and take a short walk, they left the house without further ceremony, notwithstanding her expostulations.

"Nebber mind, Mammy," said Pompey; "dey come back. Me help you cook dinner meantime."

Owen took a path in the first instance away from the harbour, but as his great object was to obtain a view of it, he doubled back on the other side, and then hurried towards it. Just as they had caught sight of the water through the trees, they came upon a hut, near which they were about to pass, when Owen heard the voice of a man, as if in pain, proceeding from it. Prompted by a kind feeling and a wish to relieve the sufferer, he entered. On a rude bunk lay a white man, apparently ill of fever. He appeared greatly astonished at seeing Owen and his companions.

"Who are you?" he asked. "I thought the ship had sailed."

"I would inquire who you are?" said Owen.

"Well, sir, I am an unfortunate fellow, who wishes that he was anywhere but where he is. I see that you are not one of the *Eagle's* crew, and so I don't mind telling you. I joined her to save my life, and now that I am ill I am allowed to die like a dog by myself, with no one to look after me. I was left on shore sick, and since I grew worse I have been unable to get any food, and I am too weak to walk."

Owen promised to try and induce Mammy to supply the poor fellow with nourishment. He would at once have hurried back,

but he was anxious, having got thus far, to obtain a view of the harbour. Accordingly, telling the man he would send him relief as soon as possible, he, with Dan and Tim, left the hut, and made their way on, keeping themselves concealed as much as possible among the trees and bushes till they came in full view of the harbour.

It was a wide lagoon, which narrowed towards the southern end, where a perpendicular cliff of some extent rose directly out of the water, its summit covered with trees. Both Owen and Dan were of opinion that this formed one end of the channel leading to the sea. No boats or canoes could be discovered on the beach. Further along it to the northward were seen a number of huts and buildings of larger size, probably storehouses. People were moving about among them, but it was impossible at the distance they were to know if they were blacks or whites. In the centre of the harbour lay the *Ouzel Galley*, much in the condition in which she had been when captured, and there were several smaller vessels at anchor, completely dismantled.

So far the inspection of the harbour had been satisfactory; there was nothing that Owen could see to prevent the possibility of their escaping. The party hastened back to the house. Mammy scolded them for being so long absent. "If cappen here, you no do it," she observed; by which remark they guessed that, though she held O'Harrall in awe, she had herself no ill-feeling towards them. On Owen's telling her of the sick man, she consented to let Pompey take him some food, and undertook to visit him herself, provided they would promise not to leave the house during her absence. This they readily agreed to do.

Some days afterwards, when Owen again managed to get as far as the hut, he found the man greatly recovered. John Hempson (as he said was his name) professed himself very grateful, and declared his intention of escaping from the pirates on the first opportunity. "I suppose that they will take me to sea the next time they go," he observed, "and if I then have the chance, I will leave them. They are likely to be back soon, and, indeed, I wonder they have not come in before this."

"Well, then," said Owen, "if you ever return to the old country, you must promise to find out Captain Tracy, living near Waterford, and tell him that I am alive, and hope some day to get back. Depend on it, the captain will reward you for your trouble."

"How will he believe me?" asked Hempson.

"I will write a letter for you to deliver," said Owen. He, however, recollected that he possessed no writing materials, and he might not again have the opportunity of communicating with Hempson. That moment it occurred to him that he had a small book in his pocket. It contained but a portion of a blank leaf. He tore it out, and with the end of a stick he wrote the letters "O.M."

"When my friends see this, they will know that you are speaking the truth," he said, giving the man the paper.

Just then Dan, who had gone on ahead, came hurrying back with the information that a ship was entering the lagoon, and Owen thought it prudent at once to return to the house. Mammy, on hearing this, told her captives that they must not again venture forth, and they, of course, saw the prudence of obeying her.

O'Harrall, who had returned in the ship, paid them but one visit, when he evidently wished to find a cause for quarrelling with Owen. Owen wisely kept his temper, though Dan looked as if he would like to try the strength of his shillelagh on the pirate's head. Whether or not O'Harrall suspected that his prisoners contemplated trying to make their escape, it was difficult to say; but they found that a hut was put up close to their abode, and that it was occupied by two Spaniards, ill-looking fellows, who seemed to have nothing to do but to sit at the door and smoke all day. They did not, however, prevent Mammy going out, accompanied by Pompey, to obtain provisions; and the latter brought them word that the ship had again sailed. Pompey also found out that Hempson had gone on board the ship, and Owen hoped that he would carry out his intention of escaping. Slight as was the chance that he would convey any information to Captain Tracy, it yet raised Owen's spirits.

"We, must wait, howeber, to get 'way till we can manage dese rascal Spaniards," said Pompey. "Dey keep de eye too wide open to let us go just now."

Days and weeks and months went by, and nothing occurred to vary the monotony of their existence. The Spaniards kept too strict a watch to enable them to make any excursions out of the house, and Mammy herself seemed as cautious as she had been on their first arrival. Had it not been for the interest Owen felt in teaching his two countrymen to read, his own spirits would have broken down. Pompey also begged to go to school and join their class, but he had great trouble in learning his letters, although

after he knew them he got on as rapidly as either of his companions.

Thus several months more passed by. Twice the *Eagle* came in, and again sailed without their receiving a visit from O'Harrall. Owen was becoming more and more sick at heart. It may seem strange that he and his three companions should have been kept in such thralldom by an old woman and two Spaniards, but could these ever-watchful guardians have been overpowered, and even a canoe secured, it would have been madness to have put to sea without provisions and water, with the chance of being pursued or picked up by the pirate ship. He waited, therefore, for an opportunity, which, however, he at times thought might never arrive.

Pompey had at length one day gone out with Mammy, when on his return he brought the news that the *Eagle* had been lost, and that the captain, with a portion only of the men, had returned in a small vessel they had captured. Owen naturally feared that O'Harrall, after his misfortune, would be in a worse temper than before, and was thankful that he did not make his appearance. Pompey accounted for it by informing them that he and all hands were on board the *Ouzel Galley*, busily employed in fitting her out.

It was now again the hurricane season, and some time would probably elapse before the pirates would venture to put to sea. For the same reason Owen considered that it would not be prudent to try and make their escape. Their chance, however, of getting off undiscovered was less than it had been before, for so great was the demand for hands to man the *Ouzel Galley* that the two Spaniards were called away from their post, and no others were sent to take their places. One evening, about this time, Pompey made his appearance in a great state of agitation.

"What do you tink, Cappen Massey?" he exclaimed. "I talk berry often to Mammy, and not 'spect anyting, but dis berry morning I'se tell her dat, when I was one piccaninny, I'se carried away from Africa wid my mudder; when I'se come to Jamaica, one massa buy her and anoder buy me, and from dat day I neber set eyes on her. We talkee for some time, and den she cry out, 'You Pompey, my son,' and she trew her arms round my neck and burst into tears. Den I kiss her and tell her dat she right, and we laugh and cry togeder for two 'ole hours."

Owen, upon further questioning Pompey, was convinced that he was not mistaken. It greatly raised his spirits, and he had now hopes that Mammy would connive at their escape, even if she

would not venture to assist at it. Pompey was very sanguine about the matter. "She so happy to find me dat she do anyting I ask," he said positively. "Neber fear, cappen, we get away soon."

It was, of course, necessary to wait till the *Ouzel Galley*, now fitted out as a piratical ship, should sail. With varied feelings Owen saw her one morning gliding out of the harbour. He, accompanied by Pompey, had gone as near to her as he could venture. He had but little to fear of being discovered, as the whole population of the place were watching the departing ship. It was certainly trying to see his own vessel sailing away in the hands of the miscreants who had captured her, on an expedition which boded ill for any merchant vessels she could overtake. She was rigged exactly as before.

Owen would not have delayed making the attempt to escape, but the nights were moonlight, and they would run a great risk of being discovered. After this bad weather came on, and a further delay occurred. Pompey had undertaken to look out for a suitable craft. It was necessary to use caution in the search lest their intention might be suspected. He had made several trips along the shore, and had discovered places where boats and canoes were hauled up, but some were too large and heavy, and others too small. At last he said that he had found one of a proper size to hold five persons, and provisions and water sufficient to last them for a week or ten days. "Five persons!" exclaimed Owen.

"Yes, cappen. Mudder says she go too. If she stop, dat fellow cut her troat."

Although Owen would rather have dispensed with the company of the old woman, yet, in common humanity, he felt bound to take her if she wished to go. It showed, also, that she had confidence in their success, and would contrive to obtain the necessary provisions. About this she had been engaged for some time, getting some in one place and some in another, so that no suspicions might be raised as to her object.

The *Ouzel Galley* had sailed a fortnight or more, when Pompey announced that all was ready. Mammy packed up all the provisions in bundles, and had obtained two small casks of water, besides a number of gourds filled with the precious liquid. Pompey and Dan started as soon as it was dark, carrying loads, which they intended to hide near where the canoe was drawn up.



"We carry all de tings dere first," he said, "and den you, cappen, and mudder, and Tim, come along, and we shove off widout delay."

The last trip was made at about an hour before midnight, when Pompey and Dan returned, and Owen, with the old woman and Tim, accompanied them down to the beach. The night was very dark; no human being was stirring. As silently as possible the canoe was launched, when the stores were quickly put on board.

"Now, mudder, we put you 'longside cappen," whispered Pompey. "Whateber happen, don't cry out."

And taking the old woman up in his arms, he waded with her till he plumped her down in the stern of the canoe. She knew no more of the navigation than they did, so she could not be of further use to the adventurers, and they thus had to depend on their own judgment.

Owen took the after paddle. Pompey placing himself in the bows, Dan and Tim gave way, and the canoe noiselessly glided down towards the supposed entrance to the harbour. They hoped that any look-outs who might, under ordinary circumstances, have been stationed on the other side of the channel, would be withdrawn to man the *Ouzel Galley*. They therefore trusted that they could escape without being questioned. Still the expedition was one to try the best strung nerves. Owen feared that, should they be hailed, Mammy might forget her son's injunction. He was not aware of the determined character of the old woman.

They soon got into the narrow channel, in the centre of which Owen steered the canoe. It was necessary to proceed slowly, as from the darkness the shore on either side was in some places scarcely visible. The channel was long and intricate, but Owen, of course, knew that there must be considerable depth of water to allow large ships to get up it. They had just got to the end of the cliff, when a light was seen. Whether it proceeded from a hut or from a man with a lantern, it was impossible to say.

"Cease paddling," whispered Owen; and the canoe glided on with the impulse already given to it.

The light remained stationary.

"Give way," he again whispered. The men plied paddles as before. They had got some way further down, when they were startled by hearing a man shout, "Who goes there?"

They all remained perfectly silent and motionless. Just then the noise of the surf on the shore reached their ears, and they knew that they must be close to the entrance.

The man did not repeat his question for nearly a minute. As soon as he again began to speak, Owen told Dan and Tim to paddle away. He and Pompey did so likewise, and the canoe glided forward at a far more rapid rate than before. A shot was heard, but the bullet came nowhere near them. It was evident they could not be seen by the guard. The channel now widened out considerably, and they could distinguish the open sea beyond; they made towards it. There was but little or no surf on the bar, and they crossed without shipping a drop of water.

Owen had made up his mind to steer to the southward till they should sight Cuba. He felt sure that the pirate island was one of those which exist close to the Bahama Bank. Owen steered by the stars. His crew plied their paddles all night, the wind being too light to make it worth while to set the sail, and they hoped to be far out of sight of the island by daybreak. They were not without fear, however, that they might be pursued. The man who had fired at them would suppose that they were fugitives.

"Ill luck to the spalpeens who may be sent in chase after us!" observed Dan, showing what he was thinking about.

"Me no tink dat any boat come off after us," said Pompey, "'cos ebery man who can pull an oar is on board *Ouzel Galley*, so we safe as to dat."

The black's remark was cheering to Owen, who had hitherto thought it very probable that they would be pursued. Mammy, who as yet had not uttered a word, corroborated her son's statement.

When morning broke the island could scarcely be seen astern, nor was any land in sight ahead. The sea was perfectly calm; the sky overhead undimmed by a cloud. Owen looked round; no sail was visible in any direction. All they could do was to paddle on, in the hope that a favourable breeze would spring up to carry them on their course, when two at a time might get some sleep. The weather looked perfectly settled, and, though the canoe was somewhat deeply laden, Owen felt confident that she would be able to go through any sea which was likely to get up.

His chief anxiety arose from the possibility there was of falling in with the *Ouzel Galley*. Should they do so, they could scarcely expect any mercy from the pirates. He, of course, intended to do his best to keep clear of her. This he trusted that he might easily do, as the canoe, being low in the water, was not likely to be attract the attention of those on board the ship, while she could be seen in time to be avoided.

A breeze came at last; the sail was hoisted, and the canoe ran merrily before it. Dan begged that he might take the steering paddle, and that the captain would lie down and get some rest, which Owen was glad to obtain, as he intended to steer during the night. The sun was setting when he awoke, and after some supper was served out he resumed the steering paddle, and told Dan and Pompey, who had hitherto been keeping watch, to turn in. Notwithstanding the sleep he had obtained, towards morning he began to feel very drowsy; still his eye was fixed on the star by which he was directing the course of the canoe.

Tim had been stationed forward to keep a look-out, and Owen had hailed him every now and then to ascertain that he was awake. He had not done so, however, for some time, and was on the point of crying out, when Tim exclaimed, "By the powers, captin, there's a big ship ahead!"

"Lower the sail!" exclaimed Owen. "Dan and Pompey, out with your paddles."

They started up at hearing their names called, and obeyed the order.

"Paddle for your lives, lads!" cried Owen, keeping the canoe to the eastward.

Tim was not mistaken. The wide-spread canvas of a large ship was seen towering upwards not half a mile away; in a few minutes more she would have been close to the canoe. Owen and his companions watched her anxiously; there could be little doubt that she was the *Ouzel Galley*. Although she was clearly seen, they might hope to escape observation. They continued, however, paddling away at right angles to her course till they were well abreast of her, when Owen once more put the canoe's head to the southward; but not, however, till she was out of sight did he venture again to hoist the sail. The danger he had chiefly feared was past. It would take her probably a day or two before she could reach the harbour and discover their flight, and they might hope thus to keep well ahead of any boat sent in pursuit of them.

Two days more they stood on. One passed by very like the other. The wind remained steady, the sea smooth.

On the fourth day, some time after sunrise, a sail was seen ahead. Had not they all felt sure that the ship they had passed was the *Ouzel Galley*, they would have avoided her. Although prepared, if necessary, to perform the whole voyage to Jamaica, Owen judged that it would be far safer to get on board the first ship they could fall in with. He resolved, therefore, to approach her, and should she prove to be English, to run alongside. He little doubted that, even should she be French or Spanish, on their giving an account of their escape from the pirates, they would be treated with humanity. He accordingly steered towards her.

"Hurrah!" cried Dan. "She's a frind, she's a frind—for, there, up goes the English flag."

His quick eye had seen the character of the bunting as it ascended in a ball to the peak, even before it blew out to the breeze.

As the canoe approached, the ship hove to, and in a few minutes the party of fugitives were alongside. Owen was quickly on deck, when the first person he encountered was Gerald Tracy. Exclamations of surprise burst from their lips, and Owen was soon shaking hands with Norman Foley and the rest of the *Champion's* officers. His companions had followed him, Pompey shoving up old Mammy with his shoulder, while Dan hauled away at her from above. Numerous questions were put to Owen as to where he had come from, and he had to answer them before he could ask others in return.

At first he had experienced a feeling of intense satisfaction upon finding himself on board a friendly ship, but his grief may be imagined when he now heard that Captain Tracy and his daughter had fallen into the power of O'Harrall and his savage crew. Instead of rejoicing at his escape, he regretted having left the island, lest they might retaliate on their hapless prisoners. He trembled at the thought of what might be Norah's fate. Gerald, of course, shared his feelings; and, indeed, every one sympathised with them both.

As soon as the canoe was hoisted up the sails were filled, and the *Research* again stood on her course towards the pirate's island.

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## Chapter Twenty One.

**Voyage of the Research commenced—Norah's anxieties—A calm—Tropical sea—A gale springs up—The ship runs before it—Again stands to the westward—A dangerous position—Among islands and reefs—A suspicious sail—Chased—The Ouzel Galley—The pirate's flag—The pirate begins firing—Norah placed in the hold—A fort seen on the island—No boats come off—The island passed—The pirates fore-topsail yard shot away—The second mate and several men of the Research killed or wounded—A calm—Damages repaired—A breeze springs up—The pirate overtakes the Research—Runs her on board—Fearful slaughter of her crew—Captured—The two old captains unhurt—Norah's interview with the pirate—Taken on board the Ouzel Galley—Courteously treated—A sail in sight—Chased by a frigate—The Ouzel Galley escapes among the reefs—A calm—The frigate's boats approach to attack her—A breeze springs up—She escapes.**

The two old captains were well aware of the numerous perils they might possibly have to encounter when they sailed on their voyage in the *Research*, but for the sake of Norah they took care to make light of them whenever their prospects of success were discussed in her presence. Norah very naturally would ask questions, and to those questions they were compelled to try and find answers. In what part of the numberless groups of those western islands were they to search for Owen and Gerald? One subject absorbed all their thoughts—on that alone could they converse. Even when Captain O'Brien, as he frequently did, tried to introduce any other, it before long was sure to merge into that one. Norah day after day would unroll the chart of the West Indies, and pore over it for hours, till she knew the form and position and size of every island and key, and reef and sandbank, delineated thereon. The ship had already reached the tropics when a heavy gale sprang up from the westward, before which she was compelled to run for three days. She then had a long beat back, and the weather being unusually thick, no observations could be taken to determine her position. Day after day the two captains and the first mate came on deck at noon with their quadrants, but not a break in the clouds appeared through which they could get a glimpse of the sun.

They calculated at last that they could not be far off the most western of the Bahamas, and, as they hoped, near the entrance

of the Windward Passage. At sunset the clouds dispersed, the wind shifted to the northward, the stars shone brightly forth from the clear sky, and it was hoped that the next day they might be able to determine their position. As no land had yet been seen, they stood on for the greater part of the night; but towards morning, Captain Tracy; afraid of running further, hove the ship to, to wait for daylight.

Even before the first streaks of dawn appeared above the eastern horizon, the two mates, followed by Captain O'Brien, went aloft, eager to catch the expected sight of land. What was their surprise to discover it not only to the westward, where they had looked for it, but away to the south-east and over the starboard quarter. The ship had run in during the night among a group of islands, but what islands they were it was difficult to determine. Norah had dressed and appeared from her cabin as her father and Captain O'Brien came below to consult the chart.

"Here is our position, if I mistake not," said Captain Tracy, placing his finger on the chart. "We are further to the south'ard than I had supposed. An ugly place to have got to, but it might have been worse; the ship would have chanced to run foul of a reef had we stood on. But, Heaven be praised, we've escaped that disaster, and we'll now try to thread our way into the Windward Passage."

While the course to be pursued was still under debate, a cry from aloft was heard of—"A sail to the nor'ard!"

The captains hurried on deck, followed by Norah. "What is she like?" asked Captain Tracy.

"A large ship under all sail, standing this way, sir," answered the second mate.

In a short time it became evident that the *Research* was seen by the stranger, for the latter set every stitch of canvas she could carry, and steered directly after her.

A small island appeared ahead. At first it was proposed to pass to the westward of it, but the look-out from the mast-head discovering several dark rocks rising above the surface, and extending to a considerable distance in that direction, the ship's course was altered so that she would run along the eastern side of the island, as close in as prudence would allow. It was hoped that, to the southward of the island, a channel might be found which would lead her clear of the rocks and shoals by which she was surrounded.

Norah, who had continued on deck, had seldom withdrawn her eyes from the stranger, which appeared to her to be much nearer than when first seen. "What do you think, Captain O'Brien—is not that vessel fast gaining on us?" she asked.

"That may be, my dear Miss Norah, but it need not make us fear that she will come up with us," answered the old captain, who could not deny the fact. "She hitherto has had the advantage of a stronger breeze than has filled our sails, but we may shortly get more wind and slip away from her. If she does come up with us, we may find that she is perfectly honest, and that we had no cause to try and keep out of her way; so don't be alarmed, my dear, but go below and have some breakfast—it is on the table by this time—and your father or I will join you presently. One of us must remain on deck to look out for any reefs which may run off that island yonder."

Captain Tracy giving Norah the same advice, she unwillingly went below, and took her seat at the breakfast-table to await their appearance. She waited and waited, but neither of the captains nor the first mate came below. They were all, indeed, too busily engaged in watching the progress of the stranger and discussing her character to think of breakfast. She had been bringing up a much stronger breeze than had hitherto filled the sails of the *Research*, to which she had now got almost within gunshot. Captain Tracy had for some time been intently examining her through his telescope.

"Tell me if you have ever seen that craft before," he said, handing it to Captain O'Brien. "My eyes may deceive me, and it may be mere fancy, but I cannot help thinking that she is a ship I ought to know well."

"By my faith, I ought to know her too," exclaimed Captain O'Brien. "If that vessel isn't the *Ouzel Galley*, she has been built to look like her. Perhaps, after all, our friend Owen may have run her on one of the unfrequented keys to the nor'ard, and, having only lately got her afloat and refitted, is now on his way to Jamaica. He is therefore naturally anxious to speak an English ship, to hear news from home."

"That vessel may be the *Ouzel Galley*, but Owen Massey would never hoist such a piece of bunting as that," cried Captain Tracy, who, having again taken the telescope, was looking towards the stranger, which had just then run up to her fore topgallant mast-head a black flag with the well-known pirate's device of a death's head and cross-bones. The object was evidently to intimidate the crew of the chase.

Directly afterwards the stranger yawed and fired her foremost gun. The shot came flying across the water, but, after several times striking the surface, sank short of the *Research*. There was no longer any doubt of the character of the stranger.

"Lads," cried Captain Tracy, "you see that flag! Death or worse than death will be our lot if we don't beat off the piccarooning villains who have hoisted it. They think to frighten us; but stand to your guns like men, and we'll beat her off." The crew cheered, and promised to do their duty.

Norah had not heard the sound of the gun fired by the pirate, but the men's hearty cheers reaching the cabin, she hurried on deck to learn what caused them. Just as she appeared, the pirate, again yawing, fired three shot in rapid succession, one of which glanced along the side of the *Research*. Captain Tracy had just ordered two guns to be brought aft, and the crew were engaged in the operation, when, seeing Norah, he begged Captain O'Brien to take her below and to place her where she could be out of the way of harm. She had seen enough, however, to show her the state of affairs; her fears were realised.

"Come away, my dear," said the old captain, taking her hand. "Bound shot are ugly playthings for young ladies, and the sooner we get you stowed safely away the more ready we shall be to carry on the game with yonder gentleman. We'll beat him, so don't be alarmed when you hear our guns firing. Perhaps we shall knock some of his spars away, and we shall then take the liberty of leaving him to repair damages at his leisure."

Captain O'Brien thus talked on, endeavouring to keep up Sarah's spirits, as he conducted her to a secure place in the hold, which, with the help of the cook and steward, he set about arranging for her. It reminded her of the place to which she and Gerald had been sent on board the *Ouzel Galley*, when her father and Owen, with their handful of men, had so bravely fought the famous Captain Thurot and his numerous crew. The recollection of that event encouraged her to hope that the well-manned *Research* would beat off a vessel much larger than herself, however desperately the pirate's ruffianly crew might fight. She sat with her hands clasped, endeavouring to retain her composure. She would have been thankful for any occupation, but she could do nothing but sit still and wait for the result of the impending fight—yes, she could pray; and earnestly she did so, that her beloved father and his friends might be protected from the shot of the foe.



When Captain O'Brien returned on deck, he found that the two guns had been pointed through the stern-ports. The match was applied, and both were fired by the first mate in quick succession; but no visible effect was produced on the enemy's spars.

"Run them in, my lads, and load again," cried Captain Tracy. "Let me see what I can do; if we can wing the pirate, we shall be saved further trouble." Running his eye along one of the guns, he fired; Captain O'Brien at the same time discharging the other. Looking through his telescope, Captain Tracy uttered an exclamation of impatience as he could discover no damage caused by the shot on the pirate's rigging. The broad spread of white canvas remained extended as before to the yards. "We must try again and again till we succeed," he exclaimed; "maybe we shall have better luck next time." While the guns were being run in and loaded, he turned his telescope towards the island, which was now broad on the starboard beam. "Why, as I live, there is a British ensign flying above what looks very like a fort in the centre of the island!" he exclaimed. "If there is anchorage under it, we can run in and set the pirate at defiance. He does not appear to have discovered the fort, or he would not venture so near it."

Captain O'Brien took the glass, and minutely examined the coast. "I see no opening between the reefs through which we could get up anywhere near the fort," he observed. "Were we to attempt to run in, we should very probably get the ship on the rocks, and be far worse off than we are likely to be if we stand on and trust to our guns to beat off the piccaroon. Though the sea is so smooth here, the surf is breaking heavily on the reefs and shore. If you'll take my advice, you'll not make the attempt. There must be Englishmen on the island, though how they came there is more than I can say, but I am very sure that, on seeing a British ship chased by a pirate, they would come off to our assistance if they could launch their boats through the surf."

Captain Tracy acknowledged that his friend was right. To stand in closer to the reefs in order to look for an opening through them would be, should one not be found, to allow the pirate to come up and attack them with rocks close aboard.

The two ships ran on for some distance, the pirate gaining but slightly, if at all, on the chase. All the time a rapid fire was kept up from the two guns run through the stern-ports of the *Research*, the pirate almost as frequently discharging her bow-chasers. Her shot as she drew close began to tell with deadly

effect. The second mate was the first to fall; two of the crew were soon afterwards desperately wounded, and another was killed; still the spars and rigging had hitherto escaped much damage. Matters were becoming very serious, when the shot from a gun trained by Captain O'Brien brought down the pirate's fore-topsail yard; the studding-sail booms being carried away at the same time, the studding-sails were seen flapping wildly in the wind.

"I am thankful that my old eyes are still of some use," he said, as he saw the effect he had produced. The British crew cheered right lustily.

The wind, which had been falling, breezed up a little, and the *Research* glided on out of reach of the pirate's guns. Not a moment was lost in repairing the slight damages her rigging had received. It was seen, however, that the pirates were similarly employed.

"The yard was only shot away in the slings, without damaging the mast, I fear," observed Captain O'Brien. "It will take the rascals some time, however, before they can sway it aloft, and ere then, if this breeze holds, we shall have run the pirate well out of sight."

But the breeze did not hold. As the day advanced the wind fell, and the two vessels lay becalmed just within long range of each other's guns. Both continued firing as before.

Poor Norah, as she sat all alone in the dark hold, was not forgotten. Sometimes Captain O'Brien and sometimes her father hurried below to say a few cheering words, assuring her that they hoped before long to get clear of the pirate.

The calm continued, allowing time to repair damages, and to commit the poor fellows who had been killed to the deep. A breeze was eagerly looked-for by all on board the *Research*. Should it come from the eastward, she would probably get it as soon as the pirate and retain her present advantage, but if from the northward, the enemy might creep up to her before she could move. Preparations were made for every emergency. The crew stood ready to brace the yards, from which the sails hung down against the masts, as might be required; the guns were loaded, and run out; pikes, cutlasses, muskets, and pistols were placed ready, in convenient positions to be grasped, should the pirate succeed in getting alongside.

The day wore on, and evening was approaching. The old captains were looking out astern.

"Do you see yonder dark line of water?" asked Captain O'Brien, grasping his friend's arm. "The pirate, after all, will get the wind before we do."

"It cannot be helped. We must do our best, and trust in Providence," answered Captain Tracy. "Our men will prove staunch, and though the villains outnumber them, and their metal is heavier than ours, we may still beat them off."

In less than a minute the sails of the pirate were seen to blowout, and she began slowly to glide through the water. Those of the *Research* gave a few loud flaps against the masts, and then hung down again, then swelled slightly to the breeze; but before she had gathered way, the pirate had gained considerably on her.

"We must try to stop her progress," exclaimed Captain O'Brien. "A gold doubloon to the man who first knocks away a spar; and if I succeed myself, I'll keep it in my pocket."

The old captain fired one of the stern guns as he spoke, but the shot did no harm to their pursuer. The first mate and the most experienced gunners among the crew tried their hands with no better success. The speed of the *Research* was increasing, but the pirate, having now got a steady breeze, came on faster than she was going through the water.

"If we can maintain our present distance, we may still escape the enemy during the night," observed Captain Tracy.

The sun was setting on the starboard hand, casting a ruddy glow on the sails of the two ships.

"Would that we could knock away a few of her spars, though," said Captain O'Brien; "it would make the matter more certain."

"It is to be hoped that she'll not knock away some of ours," remarked the first mate, as he observed the pirate yawing.

By doing so she brought her starboard broadside to bear on the *Research*, and every gun from it was fired at once. Although no one on deck was hurt, it wrought sad havoc in the rigging: braces and shrouds were shot away, the main-topsail yard was cut almost in two, the foreyard was severely damaged, and two or three of the lighter spars were knocked away. The old

captains gazed up at the injuries which had thus suddenly been produced. To repair them seemed almost hopeless.

"I feared it would be so," muttered the first mate. "These fellows have some good gunners among them, as we shall find too soon to our cost."

Still neither of the sturdy old captains were inclined to despair. Hands were sent aloft to fish the foreyard, and to knot and splice the most important parts of the running rigging. The main-topgallantsail was let fly, the main-topsail brailed up so as to take the strain off the yard. The two stern guns were in the mean time kept actively employed.

The pirate gained more and more on the chase.

"We shall have to fight it out, yardarm to yardarm, if the pirates so choose, or maybe they think fit to board us," muttered the first mate. "They have the game in their own hands, and if we cannot manage to beat them back, they'll be masters of the *Research* before long."

He spoke too low for the rest of the crew to hear him, but his words reached Captain O'Brien's ears.

"Cheer up, Mr Rymer; never say die while there's a chance of life," he observed. "Though we may not like the look of things, it's better not to let the men know what we think, or our good captain either. He must be sorely troubled with the thoughts of the fearful position in which his young daughter will be placed, should the pirates overcome us."

"Overcome us!" exclaimed the mate. "I'd sooner blow the ship up with all hands, if it comes to that."

"No, no, my friend; don't attempt so mad and wicked a deed," said the old captain. "In doing that, we should be imitating the rascally buccaneers themselves. We are bound to leave our lives in God's hands, and He'll order things as He sees best. All we have to do is to fight to the last, and to try and save the ship from the pirate's hands."

"I hope we may succeed, sir," said the mate, his spirits animated by the old captain's remarks. "I, for one, will do nothing desperate, and I'll tell the gunner and boatswain what you say."

The pirate continued creeping up on her expected prey, firing her guns as they could be brought to bear; while the crew of the *Research*, firm to their promise, returned shot for shot, some aiming at their antagonist's rigging, others at the hull—though two more of their number were killed, and three or four wounded. The latter, however, having stanchied the blood flowing from their limbs, returned to their guns, and continued fighting them with all the energy of despair.

They could not fail to see that they were suffering more than their opponent. The pirate ship was already on the starboard quarter of the *Research*, and in a short time would be on her beam, and thus prevent her from rounding the southern end of the reef, which it was calculated she had already reached.

The gloom of night had settled down on the world of waters, but it was lighted up by the rapid flashes of the guns.

"If we could but knock away her foremast, we should still have time to luff round ahead of her," cried Captain Tracy. "Aim at that, my lads; if you do it, you will save the ship."

Twice the starboard broadside was fired, but the pirate's masts and spars still appeared to be uninjured.

The crew of the *Research* were about again to fire her guns, when the pirate, putting up her helm, ran her alongside.

"Boarders, be prepared to repel boarders!" shouted Captain O'Brien, sticking a brace of pistols in his belt, and seizing a cutlass and pike. "We must drive them back, my lads, if they attempt to get on our deck."

The mate and other officers followed his example, and the crew armed themselves with the weapons to which they were most accustomed. The next instant the pirates were seen swarming in their own rigging, led by one of their officers—a bearded, dark man, who was encouraging them by his shouts and gestures. The first mate sprang forward to encounter him, and the next moment was brought to the deck by a blow from his cutlass. In vain the two old captains endeavoured to prevent the ruffians from setting foot on the deck of the *Research*; on they came, far outnumbering her crew.

The pirate captain had cut down the gunner and boatswain, and the rest of the diminished crew found themselves opposed to four times their own number. They well knew beforehand that it would be useless to ask for quarter, and to the few who cried

out for it, none was given. The remainder, though fighting desperately, were quickly overpowered. The two old captains had wonderfully escaped being wounded; standing shoulder to shoulder, they were driven back to the companion-hatch, when the pirate captain made his way close in front of them.

"Yield, old men!" he shouted.

"Not while we have cutlasses in our hands," answered Captain O'Brien, warding off a blow made at his friend, who was wielding his own weapon with all the vigour of youth.

Just then the pirate captain exclaimed, "Yield, Captain Tracy, yield! all further resistance is useless. Your present ship is ours, as is your former craft. If you will drop your weapons, I will save your life and that of your companion. It is mad of you to hold out longer."

"He speaks the truth," said Captain O'Brien. "Tracy, we have lost the day. For the sake of your child, listen to his offers. He can but kill us at last, and we may if we live be able to protect her."

"Say what you like, and I'll agree to it," answered Captain Tracy.

"We will give in if we have your word that we and all the survivors on board will be protected from further injury or insult. We have a lady passenger, and I plead especially on her account. Will you promise that she is in no way injured or molested?" said Captain O'Brien.

"If you will take the word of a man who fights under yonder dark flag, you have it," answered the pirate.

"We yield, then," said Captain O'Brien, dropping his sword.

Captain Tracy did the same, though both felt very uncertain whether the next instant they might not be slaughtered by the savage miscreants, who had now entire possession of the deck of the *Research*.

"Go below, my friend, before the pirates find their way there. Tell Norah what has happened, and urge her to prepare for what may occur," whispered Captain Tracy. "I will try, meantime, to engage the attention of the pirate."

The latter made no remark when he saw the old captain disappearing down the hatchway.

"We have met before, Captain Tracy," he said. "I owe my life to the good services rendered me on board your ship, and I should be loth to have your death on my conscience. I have enough on it already. I know your friend, too; he is one of the few people to whom I have cause to be grateful."

"If you are the man I take you for," said Captain Tracy, intently regarding the pirate, "you owed a heavier debt to the master of the ship which I now find in your possession. You know how I regarded him, and you will relieve my mind if you can tell me where he is to be found."

"You will probably meet in a few days," answered the pirate. "He is well in health, though I considered it necessary to keep him a prisoner. You and Captain O'Brien will now have the opportunity of solacing him in his confinement."

"I thank you for the information," answered Captain Tracy. "We shall be ready to share his lot, whatever that may be."

The pirates, though they had obtained possession of the deck, had hitherto not made their way below; for they were all fully engaged, some in the barbarous work of putting the wounded out of their misery and heaving the dead overboard, and others in clearing the two ships. The wind had suddenly increased, and, as they had a dangerous reef aboard, it was necessary as quickly as possible to get them under command. Captain O'Brien had thus time to make his way into the hold and to break the intelligence of what had occurred to Norah. She, poor girl, had been intently listening to divine by the sounds which reached the hold how affairs were going. She knew too well that the engagement her father was so anxious to avoid was taking place; and the rapid firing of the guns told her that the crew of the *Research* were gallantly defending themselves. Then came the crashing sound as the pirate ran alongside. The shrieks and cries which arose informed her of the desperate hand-to-hand struggle that was going on. The comparative silence which ensued when the remnant of the British crew were cut down, alarmed her even more than did the occasional shouts of the pirates engaged in clearing the ship which reached her ears. She dreaded the worst, and had sunk down on her knees praying for strength to endure whatever trial might be in store, when, by the faint light of the lantern which hung in the hold, she saw Captain O'Brien standing before her.

"Is my father safe? Oh, tell me!" she exclaimed, grasping his hand.

"Yes; thank Heaven, he has escaped without a wound," he answered. "But affairs have not gone as we should wish," he continued, in as calm a voice as he could command. "The pirates have possession of the *Research*, but their captain, who appears to be an Englishman, has spared our lives and promised that we shall not be molested. I have hopes that he will keep his word, and you must not be cast down. We will not be separated from you, whatever may occur; but it is useless remaining longer in this dark place. We will go back into the cabin, where I will stay with you till your father comes down."

Saying this, Captain O'Brien, taking the lantern, led Norah up from the hold through a passage, by which they reached the state cabin without going on deck.

Norah's agitation made her scarcely able to stand, so Captain O'Brien led her to a sofa and took a seat by her. The next instant Captain Tracy entered. She sprang up, and, throwing her arms round his neck, burst into tears. While he was supporting her a step was heard, and the pirate leader appeared at the doorway. He gazed for a moment at Norah.

"Miss Tracy," he exclaimed, "had I known that the shot fired from my ship were aimed at the one which you were on board of, I would sooner have blown up my own craft or sent her to the bottom. I trust that you will pardon me for the alarm and anxiety I have caused you."

Norah gazed at the speaker with a look of terror as she clung to her father's arm. His countenance had been too deeply impressed upon her memory for her ever to forget it. She recognised in him the once second mate of the *Ouzel Galley*, when he had gone under the name of Carnegan—the man who had attempted to carry her off, and who had afterwards audaciously presented himself, when an officer on board the French privateer under the command of Thurot. Now he was the acknowledged captain of a band of pirates, and she and her father were in his power. He had spared the lives of the two old captains, but of what outrage might he not be guilty when he found that the love he professed was rejected? She endeavoured to recover herself sufficiently to answer him, but her efforts were for some time vain. Her limbs trembled under her; her voice refused to utter the words she would have spoken. Her father could not fail to observe her agitation.



"Retain your presence of mind, my child," he whispered, "but don't offend our captor."

By a strong effort, while the pirate stood gazing at her, she recovered herself.

"I claim nothing beyond the mercy any helpless woman might ask for on board a captured vessel," she answered at length; "and if you would save me from further suffering, I would pray that you would put my father and me, with our friend, on shore at the nearest spot at which you can land us. The vessel and cargo are yours, by right of conquest, but you can gain nothing by keeping us prisoners."

"You are mistaken, Miss Tracy," said the pirate; "I can gain everything which for long years it has been my fond desire to obtain. You recognise me, I am sure, and you cannot have forgotten the deep—the devoted love I have expressed for you. Promise me that you will no longer despise it, and your father and his friend shall not only be protected, but treated with every respect and attention they can require."

This address increased rather than allayed Norah's alarm.

"Oh, what shall I say to him?" she whispered to her father. "For your sake and Captain O'Brien's, I would not, if I can help it, arouse his anger."

Norah was, however, saved from the difficult task of answering the pirate by the appearance of one of his officers, who came to summon him on deck, that he might give his orders for the management of the two vessels. He hurried away, and left the trio to consult as to the best mode of treating him. He was for some time absent, the shouting of the officers and the tramping of the men's feet overhead showing that various operations were going forward on deck.

"You spoke well and bravely, Norah," exclaimed Captain O'Brien, after her father had placed her on the sofa, that she might the better attempt to recover from the fearful agitation she was suffering; "keep to that tone. Don't tell him how you fear and dislike him, but don't let him suppose that you are ready to consent to any proposals he may make. Humour him as much as you can, and above all things don't allude to Owen, or let him discover that he has a rival in the affection he asks you to bestow on him."

"Oh no, indeed I will not," said Norah; "and for my father's sake and yours, I will do all I can to soften his temper and make him treat you well."

"I wish you to do as Captain O'Brien suggests, for your own sake rather than for ours," observed her father. "We may defy him, as he can only murder us; but we wish to live that we may protect you. At present he appears to be in a tolerably good humour, and well he may, after capturing our good ship and her valuable cargo. He would rather have found her laden with ingots and chests of dollars; but she's a richer prize to him than the *Ouzel Galley* could have been, laden with hogsheads of sugar."

"The *Ouzel Galley*!" exclaimed Norah. "Has she fallen into that man's hands? Oh, father! has he, then, got Owen in his power?"

"He's not likely to have taken Owen's ship without capturing Owen too; but we know that he could not have put him to death, or Owen couldn't have sent us the message we received," answered her father.

"Perhaps our capture may, after all, be the means of our discovering Owen," observed Captain O'Brien. "You will not regret it then so much, Norah; and if we can regain our liberty, we may, by some means or other, carry him off also. It's an ill wind that blows no one good, depend on that."

Terribly alarmed as Norah felt, the idea suggested by Captain O'Brien somewhat cheered her.

The two captains sat, with Norah between them, endeavouring to prevent her spirits from sinking. Silence, by all means, was to be avoided, Captain O'Brien taking upon himself to be the chief spokesman. He did his best not to allude to the battle, or the slaughter of their brave crew. Little did Norah think that of all those she had seen that morning on deck, full of life and activity, not one was then in existence. She herself felt no inclination to speak of the fight, and she asked no questions about it. It was sufficient for her to know that the *Research* had been captured, and that the great object of the voyage—the recovery of Owen and Gerald—had come to nought. Weary and sad, she could not even venture to seek for the consolation of sleep. The lamp, which had been lighted at sundown, still hung from the beam above their heads, shedding a subdued light over the cabin. Some time thus passed. Occasionally the two old captains exchanged a few words in low tones, but they could not say all they thought, for they were unwilling to alarm Norah

more than was necessary. They must act according to the pirate's conduct. As he had spared their lives, he might behave generously towards them and Norah, but of this they had but slight hopes.

It flashed across Captain O'Brien's mind that he was one of the O'Harralls, whom he had saved, when a boy, from drowning, while serving on board a ship he had commanded, he having jumped overboard in a heavy sea, and supported the lad till a boat came to their assistance. He had afterwards had cause to regret having done so, when O'Harrall became notorious for his evil deeds. "It would have been better to let him drown, than allow him to gather the sins on his head for which he has to answer," thought the old captain. "But no, I did what was right; for the rest he alone is answerable. If he's the man I suspect, he may have been prompted by the recollection of the services I rendered him to spare my life, and it may induce him still to act decently towards us."

Though these thoughts passed through Captain O'Brien's mind, he did not express them aloud, or tell his friend that he believed the pirate to be any other than the outlawed ruffian, O'Harrall.

Captain Tracy was addressing a remark to him, when the cabin door opened, and the man he had been thinking about stood before them. As he examined the pirate's features, he was sure that he had not been mistaken, but he thought it prudent to keep the idea to himself.

The pirate stood for a moment gazing at Norah.

"I have come to summon you on board my vessel," he said. "Your old craft has been too much knocked about, I find, to proceed before her damages are repaired. This can be done under the lee of the island, where we will leave her while we return into port. I wish you to prepare at once to accompany me. Anything you desire to take with you shall be brought on board, but I cannot allow you much time for your preparations, Miss Tracy. Your father or Captain O'Brien will assist you in packing your trunk."

Captain Tracy, knowing that it would be useless to remonstrate, replied that they should be speedily ready; and the pirate left the cabin.

Norah, endeavouring to calm her agitation, immediately set to work to pack up the things she knew that she should most require, while her father and Captain O'Brien tumbled theirs into

a couple of valises; so that in a few minutes, when the pirate again entered the cabin, they were prepared to obey his orders. He was accompanied by a couple of men who, taking up their luggage, followed them on deck, to which he led the way. The darkness fortunately prevented Norah from seeing the marks of blood which stained the planks; she could only distinguish a number of dark forms moving about, engaged in repairing the damages the ship had received. She lay hove to, with the other vessel a short distance from her. A boat was alongside, into which the pirate desired the two old captains and Norah to descend, he offering his hand to assist her. She thanked him in as courteous a tone as she could command, and, the boat shoving off, the crew pulled away for the *Ouzel Galley*.

"You are not a stranger to this ship, Miss Tracy," observed the pirate, as he handed Norah on deck. "I regret that I was compelled to capture her, and to deprive her former master, my worthy friend Owen Massey, of his command." He spoke in a somewhat sarcastic tone, which Norah observed, but she wisely made no reply. "You will be safer in the cabin, where you will find yourselves at home," he continued; "my brave fellows are somewhat lawless, and it is as well to keep out of their sight." The pirate, as he spoke, led the way into the cabin. As they entered it, he requested that she would consider herself its mistress. "My black steward will attend to your wants, and will bring you whatever you may order. I have now to see to the navigation of the ship, so that I cannot for the present enjoy your society," he said.

Having led Norah to a sofa and desired his other guests, as he choose to call them, to be seated, he hurried from the cabin.

The light from a handsome silver lamp hung in the usual position showed them that no change had been made in its arrangements since the *Ouzel Galley* had sailed from Waterford.

"We might have been worse off, faith! but it's somewhat trying to find one's self on board one's own ship in the character of a prisoner," observed Captain Tracy. "However, our captor appears inclined to behave with as much courtesy as can be expected, and as I hope we shall not again be interrupted, I wish, Norah, you would try to obtain some sleep. O'Brien and I will watch by you, and you will be the better able to endure what you may have to go through."

"I cannot sleep; I don't wish to sleep," murmured poor Norah. "I should only dream of the dreadful events which have occurred."

After some persuasion, however, she consented to try and obtain the rest she so much needed, and in spite of her assertions, her father saw that she had dropped off into a calm slumber. He and Captain O'Brien could now speak more freely than they had hitherto done. Their firm resolution was not, on any account, to be parted from her. They had each retained their pistols, which they had concealed in their pockets, and Captain O'Brien vowed that, should any violence be threatened, he would shoot O'Harrall, and trust to win over the piratical crew by promising them the most ample rewards.

"If we kill their chief, the fellows will be awed, and we shall have time to throw the bait in their mouths; for the chances are that many of them will be glad enough to escape from the perilous course they are now compelled to follow, and if we can gain over some, the rest will not long hold out," he observed.

Captain Tracy thought his friend's plan too desperate, but he was at length won over to consent to it should O'Harrall's behaviour render some such proceeding necessary.

By a compass fixed in the forepart of the cabin, they saw that the vessel was standing to the westward, and that the wind must have shifted, as she appeared to be directly before it. After running on this course for some distance, they found that she was then hauled up to the northward. From this she appeared to deviate but slightly, sometimes a point or two to the eastward, and sometimes to the westward. They thus surmised that she was threading her way between reefs with which the pirates must have been well acquainted. Daylight at length streamed through the cabin windows, and as the sun rose above the horizon, they saw his rays glancing across the tiny wavelets which rippled the surface of the water, showing that a moderate breeze was blowing, and that the ship was under the lee of an island, which impeded the progress of the undulations rolling in from the wide ocean.

"Wherever we are going, it would be a hard matter, I suspect, without an experienced pilot, to get out again," observed Captain O'Brien.

"We must trust to protection from above, and we may hope to find the means of escape," answered Captain Tracy.

In spite of their intentions to keep awake, the two old captains could not avoid dozing off, till they were aroused by the entrance of a black, who announced himself as the steward.

"Me Jumbo—come to lay breakfast, and cappen say you hab what you like ask for, especially someting nice for de young lady."

"We shall be thankful for anything you are able to bring us, Jumbo," said Captain O'Brien. "We do not wish to give you more trouble than necessary."

"Dat berry good," answered the black, nodding as he went out of the cabin.

Before long he returned with an ample repast, consisting of several West Indian dishes and some others, the materials of which had probably been brought from the *Research*. The prisoners in reality cared but little for the food, but it was satisfactory to believe that the pirate intended to treat them with courtesy. Norah, who had taken nothing for many hours, was persuaded to eat some breakfast.

"You will feel all the better for it, my dear," said Captain O'Brien. "I never saw any use in starving one's self, even though one might be in the midst of an ocean of troubles. Matters always look worse when people are hungry, and perhaps now that we have had some food, we shall be able to see things in a brighter light. I have been thinking a good deal about Owen Massey, and should not be at all surprised that we, after all, accomplish the object of our voyage and find him. We shall have paid a high price, to be sure, by the loss of our good ship, but even that you will, at all events, not think too much if we get him back safe."

Norah smiled faintly. She almost dreaded the effect her presence might produce on the treatment of Owen, should he be in the pirate's power. The terrible thought had even occurred to her mind that the pirate might offer her the dreadful alternative of becoming his wife or seeing Owen murdered before her eyes. The idea, however, was too horrible to allow her to give it utterance.

Captain O'Brien endeavoured to amuse Norah by talking on in his usual way. He succeeded but ill in his attempts. Impossible was the task to draw her thoughts from present circumstances. "I wonder if we are to be kept prisoners below all day, or whether our piratical captor will take it into his head to invite us on deck?" he continued. "I should have no objection to smoke my pipe and enjoy a little fresh air. When Jumbo next appears, I'll send our compliments and request the favour."

The old captain carried out his intentions, and Jumbo returned with a message from the pirate captain, to the effect that they were welcome to come on deck if they chose.

Norah would have far rather remained in the cabin, but, as she dreaded being left alone, she agreed to accompany her father and Captain O'Brien. The pirate bowed as she appeared, and placed a seat for her on the poop, inquiring simply whether she had been supplied with everything she required. She briefly thanked him, and turned aside her head to avoid the gaze of the ruffianly crew, as they moved towards the after-part of the deck in the prosecution of their various duties. O'Harrall merely nodded to the two old captains, who stood by her side. The wind was baffling, and he was continually engaged in trimming sails, so that he was prevented for some time from again addressing her.

The *Ouzel Galley* had now got into a more open part of the sea, though neither of the old captains could tell exactly where they were. Again the wind became steady, and O'Harrall was coming up, apparently to speak to Norah, when the look-out from the mast-head shouted, "A sail on the starboard quarter!"

One of the chief officers was immediately sent aloft. On coming down, he reported the stranger to be a large ship running free.

"Does she look like a merchantman?" inquired O'Harrall.

"Much more like a man-of-war, judging by the cut of her canvas," was the answer, in a low voice.

"Perhaps she will take no notice of us," remarked O'Harrall. "It will be time enough if she gives chase to make sail; but it would only be drawing her attention towards us, if we were to do so now."

Captain Tracy overheard these remarks, but endeavoured to look as unconcerned as possible, though, as may be supposed, he earnestly hoped that the officer's surmise was correct, and that the stranger would endeavour to overhaul them.

The pirate continued to walk the deck, every now and then turning his glass in the direction the stranger had been seen, while the officer again went aloft. Presently he hurriedly came down and spoke a few words to the pirate captain, who instantly issued orders to the crew to make all sail.

Royals were set, and even lighter sails above them. The studding-sails were rigged out, and various strange-shaped sails were set between the masts and above and below the bowsprit. The studding-sails, however, were quickly taken in again, as the wind was too much abeam to enable them to be carried.

Captain Tracy managed, whenever the pirate's glance was turned the other way, to take a look over the quarter, and soon had the satisfaction of seeing the lofty sails of a large ship appearing above the horizon. It was pretty evident that the stranger was suspicious of the character of the *Ouzel Galley*, and was coming in chase of her.

O'Harrall and his crew seemed to be of the same opinion. They turned many an angry glance towards the old captains and Norah, as if they considered them the cause of the risk they were running of being captured. Though the *Ouzel Galley* was a fast vessel, the stranger was evidently much faster.

"What do you think she is, O'Brien?" asked Captain Tracy.

"A frigate or a large sloop of war; and though it is a difficult matter to judge of her nationality, she looks more like an English ship than a foreigner," he answered.

"Grant Heaven it may be so, and that the pirates may see the uselessness of fighting, should she come up with us," said Captain Tracy.

"They are not likely to give in without a desperate struggle, when they know that halts are in store for most of them if they are captured," replied Captain O'Brien.

O'Harrall was pacing the deck with hurried strides. He could only depend on the speed of his ship for escaping, and he well knew that no British man-of-war would engage him without doing her utmost to make him her prize. Suddenly he walked up to his prisoners, his countenance exhibiting a more ferocious aspect than they had hitherto seen it wear.

"You must go below," he said in a harsh tone; "your presence has brought us ill luck. At all events, my people think so, and I don't know how they may behave, should they see you on deck when yonder ship gets up to us."

"We will of course obey you," said Captain Tracy, taking Norah's hand; and, followed by Captain O'Brien, they descended to the cabin.



The latter would gladly have remained to watch the progress of the stranger, which he was more than ever convinced was a man-of-war. Some hours must, however pass, before she could get the *Ouzel Galley* within range of her guns. Should darkness come on, the latter would still have a chance of escaping without fighting. The eagerness of the pirate to avoid a contest showed clearly enough that they were only ready to fight when they had the hope of booty before them.

Jumbo appeared as the prisoners returned to the cabin, and placed a repast on the table. It was in every respect equal to the breaks fast. Even the old captains, however, could not do justice to it, as they were too anxious about their prospect of a speedy deliverance from captivity. They knew very well, also, that considerable danger must be run should the pirate engage the man-of-war. Shot might enter the cabin, or the ship might catch fire, or blow up, or be sent to the bottom; or the pirates, when they had lost all hope of escaping, might, in their rage, revengefully put them to death.

Jumbo had removed the dinner things, and Captain O'Brien managed to project his head far enough from the stern windows to get a sight of the stranger.

"She may overtake us before dark, but I very much doubt it," he observed. "If she does not, these fellows will manage to make their escape by running in among reefs and islands, with which they, depend on it, are well acquainted, and where the man-of-war will not venture to follow them."

As the time went by there appeared every probability that Captain O'Brien's surmise would prove correct. A ruddy glow cast across the ocean showed that the sun was sinking low, and presently the glow faded away and a grey tint alone remained. By this time the hull of the stranger appeared above the water, and Captain O'Brien declared that he was more than ever convinced she was a British frigate. The compass in the cabin showed, however, that the *Ouzel Galley* was following a devious course—now hauling up round a reef, now running for a short distance before the wind.

A shot came flying over the water from the frigate. Several others followed, but they all fell short. She was then seen to keep away before the wind to the south-west.

"She has given up the chase," exclaimed Captain O'Brien, "and our chance of liberty for the present is gone. I was afraid it would be so, but it cannot be helped."

Norah, perhaps, felt the disappointment less keenly than her companions. The thought that she was about to meet Owen was uppermost in her mind. She fancied that, once having found him, they should be able to devise a plan for their escape. Shortly after this, O'Harrall came into the cabin. "You expected the tables to be turned, and that the *Ouzel Galley* would be captured by yonder man-of-war," he observed, as he stood with his arms folded, leaning carelessly against the bulkhead. "It is as well for you, however, that we had not to engage her, for my fellows are not men who would consent to be taken alive. Had we not escaped from her, they would to a certainty have blown up the ship, when all hope had abandoned them."

"Then, sir, we may congratulate you and ourselves on having avoided a fight," said Captain O'Brien. "We may wish you a better fate, and it is certainly one we are thankful to have escaped."

"I hope to enjoy greater happiness for many years to come than has hitherto been my lot," said the pirate, gazing at Norah, who cast down her eyes to avoid his glance. "Circumstances have made me what I am, but I intend to abandon my present course, and to engage in some service where I may gain an honourable name and retrieve the years which have passed. I already possess sufficient wealth to satisfy my utmost desires. My only wish is to share it with one whose affections I may hope to gain."

The pirate continued for some time speaking in this strain. Norah did her utmost to pretend that she did not understand him, while Captain O'Brien stood fuming with rage at what he mentally called the audacious impudence of the villain. Poor Captain Tracy's heart sank, and though not less indignant than his friend, he endeavoured to conceal his feelings. Happily O'Harrall was again summoned on deck. No sooner was he gone than Norah gave way to hysterical sobs.

"Oh, father! father! kill me sooner than let him take me from you," she exclaimed. "I know too well what he means; but I would pray for death sooner than become his wife."

"If he really wishes to obtain an honourable name he will offer no violence, my child," said Captain Tracy, endeavouring to comfort her. "Heaven will find some way for you to escape."

The cause of the pirate's being summoned on deck was soon apparent. The wind had fallen, and the *Ouzel Galley* lay becalmed, surrounded by the reefs amid which she had taken

shelter. Though the passage occupied her some time, she was still at no great distance from the open channel.

"Why, as I live, there is the frigate, not more than three or four miles off," exclaimed Captain O'Brien, who had been looking through the cabin window. "Depend on it, she has kept us in sight, and when she finds that we are still within reach, and not able to get away, she'll be sending her boats in to take us during the night. I heartily hope that she may, and we shall run much less risk of injury than we should have done had she attacked the *Ouzel Galley* with her heavy guns. I believe that the pirate's threat of blowing up the ship was all bombast. These fellows, hardened villains as they are, are seldom in a hurry to go out of the world, if they can by any means prolong their miserable existence. Each man fancies that he may have a chance of escaping by turning king's evidence or getting out of prison. I doubt whether even O'Harrall himself would have the nerve to set fire to the magazine, though his capture were certain."

The darkness was now settling down on the water, and at length shrouded the stranger from view.

The pirates had evidently not been idle, and the old captains surmised that they were engaged in tricing up boarding-nettings and making all the usual preparations in case of being attacked during the night by the boats of the frigate, which they must of course have expected.

The sound of a boat lowered into the water reached the cabin, and the next minute she was seen through the stern window pulling in the direction of the frigate, probably to row guard and to give due notice should the man-of-war's boats be heard approaching: Although, during the last two nights, the inmates of the cabin had obtained but a few minutes of sleep at a time, their anxiety prevented them from closing their eyes. Even Norah, though her father urged her to try and obtain some rest, could scarcely bring herself to shut hers for a moment. They listened eagerly, expecting every minute to hear the pirate's boat return, followed by those of the man-of-war.

Several hours passed away, when Captain O'Brien, who had been watching at the stern window, exclaimed, "Here she comes!" and the next moment the boat dashed up alongside.

The ship had not been brought to an anchor, showing that the pirate entertained a hope of avoiding a fight and making his escape, should the breeze spring up before the boats could get

alongside. The night was dark, and from the lighted cabin it was impossible to see objects at any distance. Captain O'Brien, however, listened, expecting to hear the boats approach. Presently he rejoined Captain Tracy and Norah.

"Here they come," he whispered. "It would be folly to be shot by our friends, and as the pirates have forgotten to close the dead-lights, the bullets may be making their way into the cabin. We shall do well to lie down under shelter. Here, Norah, your own cabin will afford you the safest place, and your father and I will sit on the deck by your side. Should the attacking party succeed, at I have no doubt they will, we shall then avoid the risk of being shot by friends or foes."

The advice was too sensible not to be followed. Scarcely had they gained the shelter which Captain O'Brien advised, than both the broadsides of the *Ouzel Galley* were discharged, succeeded by a rapid fire of musketry, and a loud cheer from the crews of the boats.

"They will be alongside in another minute," cried Captain O'Brien.

The fluttering of some curtains hung in front of Norah's cabin showed that a strong breeze was blowing through the stern windows, and it soon became evident that the ship was moving rapidly through the water.

The crew of the pirate cheered, and several of her guns were fired. They were replied to by musketry, but the reports came one after the other, apparently from different directions.

"The villains will escape after all," exclaimed Captain O'Brien, who was on the point of jumping up to take another look through the stern window, when his friend, holding him down, observed—

"A chance bullet may come through the port, or if your head were seen, a marine would be certain to aim at it, believing that he was firing at an enemy."

The *Ouzel Galley* glided rapidly over the smooth sea, the firing on both sides ceased, and though the boats were probably still continuing the chase, they were eventually left far astern.

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## Chapter Twenty Two.

**The Research sails towards the pirate's island—Owen's conversation with Michael O'Harrall—The Research enters the pirate's harbour—Gets alongside the Ouzel Galley—Boards her—Desperate fight—O'Harrall escapes—Lieutenant Foley and Owen, with a party, land to search for Norah and her father—A joyful meeting—The pirate village set on fire—Booty carried off—The ships sail—Reach Jamaica—Welcomed by old friends—The voyage home and its results—Formation of "The Ouzel Galley Society"—Happy marriages—Norman and Gerald again sent to sea—Engagement with a French squadron—Deaths of Thurot and O'Harrall—Owen recovers his property—Conclusion.**

Gerald and Norman Foley did their utmost to comfort Owen Massey, who was almost in despair, as he thought of the fearful danger to which Norah and her father would be subjected in the power of O'Harrall. To what extremities might he not proceed? His rage, too, would be great on finding that Owen and his companions had escaped from the island, and he might vent it on the hapless prisoners in his power.

"Should he dare to ill-treat them, swift vengeance will overtake him," observed Norman.

"Yes; but the fear of that will not influence the man," exclaimed Owen, pressing his hand to his brow. "Would that I had remained on the island! I might in some way have afforded them protection—or the kind black woman would have done so."

"Bad as he is, he will not surely venture to injure my young sister and fine old father," said Gerald.

Owen, however, who had witnessed the fierce bursts of passion to which O'Harrall was accustomed to give way, still feared the worst.

He, with the lieutenant and Gerald, was walking the deck, when his eye fell on Dillon, with the boatswain standing on the watch new him.

"Why, that is one of the fellows who betrayed the *Ouzel Galley* into the hands of the enemy!" said Owen.

"He is a deserter from the *Champion*," observed Norman Foley, "and is the man who has now undertaken to pilot us into the pirate's harbour. When did he join the *Ouzel Galley*?"

"At Kingston, with some other fellows of the same stamp," answered Owen; "and I have good cause to regret having received them."

"They must have been with you, then, when I boarded the *Ouzel Galley* as you went out of Port Royal," Gerald took the opportunity of observing, after Norman Foley had left them.

Owen confessed that such was the case. "If you had done your duty, you would have discovered them," he could not refrain from adding.

"You are right, Owen," said Gerald. "I now see that every neglect of duty must produce bad consequences, but I suppose, as it was your business to conceal them from me because you wanted a crew, so it was mine to have discovered them. However, the less we say about the matter the better just now."

Owen felt a strong inclination to speak to the man Routh, or Dillon, to learn how O'Harrall had behaved towards his prisoners before they were taken on board the *Ouzel Galley*.

With the greatest effrontery, Dillon nodded to him as he approached. "So, Captain Massey, you managed to get away, after all," he said, quite coolly. "It is more than any one else has done for a long time, and several have lost their lives in making the attempt, so you are fortunate."

"That is not the matter about which I wish to speak to you," said Owen. "You were treated well while under my command, and in return I ask you to tell me how Captain O'Harrall behaved towards those he took from this ship?"

"As to that, I know very little," answered Dillon. "We killed most of the people, but the two old captains and the young lady were unhurt. They did not look very happy at finding themselves prisoners, but in other respects they had nothing to complain of, and they were allowed to take their traps with them. And now, Captain Massey, let me ask you, how do you happen to know that the real name of the pirate captain is O'Harrall? He is generally called Bermudez among us."

"I knew him long before he took to his present evil courses," said Owen. "I then hoped better things of him, and I will now ask why you are ready to betray him."

"To save my own life, and to revenge myself for the way he has treated me," answered Dillon. "He chose to consider me as his inferior, when I am his equal in every respect. Has it never occurred to you, Owen Massey, who I am? I will tell you, for I care not who knows it. I am Brian O'Harrall's younger brother Michael, whom you also once knew. Our family ousted yours; and as I conclude that neither of us is very likely to return to Ireland, and we are the last of our race, you may possibly manage to recover the property. If Brian is killed, I may perhaps assist you, and if you will promise me a sufficient recompense I am ready to do so."

From what the pirate said, Owen had no doubt that he was the person he represented himself to be; still he hesitated about entering into any engagement with a villain of his stamp.

"I must consider the subject," he answered; "much must depend upon the success of our undertaking. Should Captain Tracy and his daughter be rescued by your means from your brother's hands, whatever your motive, I shall be more deeply indebted to you than I should feel were you to assist in restoring the property of which your family deprived my father. Indeed, I cannot understand how you can be instrumental in doing that. In the mean time I can make no promise with regard to the matter."

The subject the man Dillon, or rather Michael O'Harrall, had mentioned had one beneficial effect in somewhat turning Owen's thoughts, although only occasionally, from the contemplation of Norah's and her father's position.

Two more anxious days were passed, when, towards evening, land was seen ahead, mostly lying low, with a slight elevation in the centre. The wind was favourable, and Dillon undertook to carry the ship into harbour before nightfall, declaring that he could pilot her towards the latter part of the way as well in the dark as during the daylight.

It is impossible to describe Owen's feelings. In a short time Norah might be safe, or he should hear that she had suffered a fate he dare not contemplate.

Every preparation was made for surprising the pirates and recovering the prisoners. A dozen men were dressed to look as

much as possible like the pirates who had been on board when the *Research* was captured; the black flag was hoisted at her peak. The rest of the men and the officers concealed themselves, some below, and others under the bulwarks. Dillon was ordered to take his post as if in command. A party of men, well armed, were selected and placed under the orders of Norman Foley, who, accompanied by Gerald, with Owen, Dan, and Pompey as guides, were to shove off from the ship as soon as the pirates had discovered their object, and to endeavour to find out where the prisoners were confined.

Everything went well. The wind continued favourable, the bar was crossed, and the *Research* glided up through the channel leading into the lagoon. The sun had set, and darkness was rapidly coming on; Owen and Gerald were lying down, anxiously looking out from one of the bow ports. There floated the *Ouzel Galley*, right ahead, in the centre of the lagoon. The *Research* was steered towards her, so that it might be supposed by the pirates that the new arrival was about to bring up. Instead of letting go her anchor, however, the *Research* was to run alongside the *Ouzel Galley*, which the British crew was immediately to board. As the boats on the larboard side of the *Research* could not be seen by the pirates, they were lowered into the water, and Lieutenant Foley and his party were directed to leap into them the moment concealment was no longer necessary.

The *Research* approached the *Ouzel Galley*. "What are you about, you lubbers?" shouted a voice from the latter ship. "Starboard your helm, or you will be running foul of us."

It was O'Harrall who spoke. Owen recognised his voice.

"There is something wrong," cried another man.

"Treachery! treachery!" exclaimed several of the pirates, and two guns from the *Ouzel Galley* were fired at the approaching ship. They were well aimed. One of the shots struck the bulwarks, the splinters from which wounded several persons; the other flew more aft, and the traitorous pirate, Michael O'Harrall, was seen to fall. Not a groan escaped him. The officers and crew sprang to their feet, those who were below leaping on deck.

Though the wind had fallen almost to a calm, the ship had way enough on her to bring her up alongside the *Ouzel Galley*. Grappling-irons were thrown on board. At the same time two more shots were fired by the pirates, and although, surprised as



they had been, they were seen rapidly mustering on deck, still there was evident confusion among them. The British seamen, led by their officers, pistol and cutlass in hand, were the next instant leaping down on the deck of the *Ouzel Galley*. For a few seconds the pirates fought desperately; but, bold as most of them were, they saw that their chance of success was gone. Then, with fierce oaths and cries of terror and rage, they retreated to the opposite side of the ship, and those who could threw themselves overboard with the intention of trying to swim to the shore.

One of the last to make his escape was O'Harrall. He had been hard-pressed by Lieutenant Tarwig, who shouted to him to yield; but, springing on a gun and aiming a desperate cut at the lieutenant's head (fortunately the cut was parried, or it would have finished the gallant officer), the pirate leaped over the bulwarks, and disappeared beneath the dark waters. Mr Tarwig jumped up on the gun, and eagerly looked over the side to ascertain what had become of his late antagonist. He could make out through the gloom several persons swimming away from the ship, but whether or not one of them was O'Harrall, it was impossible to say.

Not a pirate now remained alive on the deck of the *Ouzel Galley*. A dozen or more had been cut down, and so effectually had the British seamen wielded their cutlasses that every one of them had been killed outright. The marines had followed the boarders, and now began firing away at the pirates in the water; but, the darkness concealing the swimmers, no effective aim could be taken. As the boats on the starboard side could not be lowered while the two ships were close together, and those on the other had gone away under Lieutenant Foley, the pirates could not be pursued, or probably several would have been captured.

Commander Olding, knowing the treachery of which the pirates were capable, at once ordered a search to be made below, in case they might have tried to blow up the ship; he himself hurrying into the cabin, where he thought it possible that the prisoners might still be confined. He soon ascertained that they were not there, but he discovered a door leading to the main hold. Obtaining a light, he, followed by the master and Crowhurst, made his way to the part of the hold which had before served as a refuge to Norah and her friend Ellen.

In the mean time, Norman Foley's party, with Owen, had pulled for the western side of the lagoon. As soon as the boats reached

the beach, the whole of the party leaped on shore, with the exception of a few hands left to guard the boats.

"This way," cried Owen, dashing forward in the direction of the building which had so long been his prison. His fear was that O'Harrall might have reached the shore, and would carry off Norah. Of one thing he felt nearly sure, that O'Harrall would have imprisoned her and her father there as the most secure place in which he could leave them; still even that was doubtful, and he might have a long search before they could be discovered.

Norman and Gerald did their best to keep the men together, and to follow close at his heels. At any moment they might be attacked by the pirates. They could not tell how many of the outlaws were collected on the island; it was probable, they thought, that there were the crews of other vessels besides O'Harrall's followers. Firing could be heard from the side of the harbour, and they concluded therefore that fighting was taking place in that direction.

It had not occurred to Owen that the prisoners might have been kept on board the *Ouzel Galley*, and that after all he might be disappointed by not finding Norah. Dan and Pompey sprang forward to his side, and assisted him in keeping to the right path, with which they were far better acquainted than he was. They had got close to the building, when a voice shouted in Spanish, "Who goes there?" The flash and report of a musket followed; the bullet whistled over their heads.

"Bedad, it's thim Spanish rascals who had charge of us," cried Dan. "Faix, but it's all right, for the captin is sure to be there. Give a cheer, lads, and they will know we are coming."

The seaman, without stopping to receive the order from their officers, uttered a true British cheer, which had the effect of making the Spanish guard take to their heels; and the next instant Owen, bursting open the outer door, was mounting the ladder which led to the loft, followed by Gerald, Dan, and Pompey, the others pressing after them. Quickly reaching the top, Owen found his hand grasped by that of Captain Tracy. The next moment Norah was in his arms, while the old captain was almost overcome with joy and astonishment at seeing his son. For some seconds their feelings prevented them from uttering a word, when Captain O'Brien, coming forward, exclaimed—

"I am delighted to see you, lad, for we had well-nigh given you up as lost. How have you managed to make your way here? Tell

us all about it. From hearing the firing we guessed that the pirates must have been attacked."

Before Gerald could reply, Dan and Pompey had come up the ladder. Mr Foley quickly made his appearance, and gave a more succinct account of the events which had occurred than the rest of the party would probably have been able to do.

While the lieutenant was recounting what had happened, Gerald had time to tell Norah how thankful he was to find her again. She could even now, however, with but difficulty utter a word. On being brought to the loft, she had discovered that it had been occupied by Owen, and, not knowing that he had escaped, her fears for his safety had been unspeakable, although her father and Captain O'Brien had endeavoured to persuade her that he must have got away during O'Harrall's absence. O'Harrall himself refused to afford any information on the subject, apparently feeling satisfaction at the agony the poor girl was suffering. He had paid his prisoners two visits, but had not, as far as they could judge, made up his mind how he should dispose of them—although, from some hints he had let drop that very evening, they were apprehending the worst.

Norman Foley, who was ignorant of the number of persons on the island, fearing that his party might be attacked, thought it prudent at once to return to the boats and get on board the *Research*. Norah and the two captains were perfectly willing to accompany him; and the seamen shouldering their trunks, the party at once set off, guided by Dan and Pompey—Owen very naturally preferring to escort Norah instead of taking the lead. Her father and Captain O'Brien walked on either side of them, with cutlasses in their hands and pistols in their belts, the only articles belonging to the pirates which they had carried off. A sharp look-out was kept on either hand, lest any of the pirates lying in ambush might spring out and attempt to recover the prisoners. They, of course, supposed that the Spaniards, who had made their escape, would give the alarm.

Owen breathed more freely when they at length reached the boats. As he looked along the shore, he observed that all the lights in the huts had been extinguished, the inhabitants, expecting to be attacked by the English, having probably fled. The men in charge of the boats reported that none had approached them, nor had they seen any persons swimming to shore.

The party quickly embarked, and were received with loud cheers, as they got alongside the *Research*, when it was known that the old captain and his daughter had been recovered.

With feelings of intense satisfaction and thankfulness, Owen once again trod the deck of the *Ouzel Galley*, which, though a lawful prize to the *Champion's* crew, Commander Olding assured him should be delivered up to him. The cargo with which he had sailed from Montego Bay had long since been removed, but a large amount of, treasure was found on board which, from its character, it was known must have been pillaged from some Spanish ship. It would therefore now become the property of Commander Olding and his ship's company.

Lieutenant Foley, with thirty men, was sent on board the *Ouzel Galley*, and every preparation was made for her defence should the pirates venture to attack her during the night. No attempt of the sort, however, was made, nor indeed was a single boat seen moving across the calm waters of the lagoon, nor could any of the inhabitants be discerned on shore. The morning found the two ships floating peaceably in the centre of the lagoon; and except a few huts scattered here and there along the beach, and the dismantled vessels further up the harbour, no sign existed of its being the pirates' stronghold. It owed its security entirely to its remote position and the intricacy of the channel leading to it. Before quitting it, the commander considered it his duty to search the vessels and to destroy the pirates' dwellings. Perhaps, too, he had hopes of discovering some of their booty.

An expedition was therefore sent on shore, under the command of the first lieutenant. The vessels, having been examined, were found to be empty; none of the huts contained any articles of value. All met with having been burnt to the ground, the party proceeded inland, until they reached the large building which had so long served as the prison of Owen and his companions. A secret door was discovered, opening from the outer room in which old Mammy had lived. On bursting it open an inner room was found, nearly full of booty of various descriptions. Among it were bales of rich silks, muslins, and cloths, cases of cutlery and casks of wine, boxes of preserves, gold and silver ornaments, caskets of jewels, and numerous other articles. Those of most value, which could easily be carried off, were at once shouldered by the men, who forthwith returned with them to the boat. On their arrival on board, another party was despatched to bring off the greater part of the remainder, when the store was set on fire and the rest consumed.

By this time a breeze had sprung up, and as it was important to take advantage of it, sail was made, and the *Research* leading, under the pilotage of the master and Owen, assisted by Dan and Pompey, the two vessels began to thread their way along the channel. The lead was of course kept going; and as they neared the more intricate part, the wind being light, a boat was sent ahead to sound. Thus, all dangers being avoided, they at length, just before sunset, got clear out to sea. Fair breezes now wafted them rapidly along. Owen had remained on board the *Research* that he might enjoy the society of Norah, who would not willingly have again been parted from him.

The weather continued fine, and after a run of ten days the two ships entered Port Royal harbour, and stood on until they dropped their anchors before Kingston. They were immediately boarded by numerous persons from the shore. Among the first who reached the *Ouzel Galley* was Mr Ferris. He was greatly astonished, at finding Norman Foley in command, and still more so at hearing what had befallen her.

"Your reappearance, my dear fellow, will restore life and animation to my poor girl. Although she would not believe you were lost, we had given you up, for it was generally supposed that the *Champion* had gone down in a hurricane, or been sunk by an enemy, or driven on shore without any one escaping to give an account of the catastrophe. We only arrived here a few days ago, and have been waiting for a vessel to return home, with several other persons. One of them is Miss Pemberton, Ellen's great friend. Poor girl! she had a severe trial, and she and Ellen have sympathised with each other. You saw her at Bellevue with that fine soldier, Major Malcolm. They were engaged to marry, having been smitten at first sight, but he and young Belt, who so gallantly defended Bellevue, were sent in pursuit of the rebel blacks. They had followed the rascals into their mountain fastnesses, and, regardless of the danger to which they exposed themselves, pushed on ahead of their own men into a defile, where they were both shot down by a party of negroes lying in ambush. For some time we thought Fanny would never get over it; but she has been advised change of scene and air, so we are taking her with us to Ireland. Archie Sandys, that brave young fellow whom you had on board the *Champion*, also forms one of the party. He has lately come into a good property, so he has given up his situation out here. And now, what are you going to do?"

Norman Foley, eager at once to see Ellen, replied that he must first deliver up the *Ouzel Galley* to the prize agents, and as soon

as that duty had been performed he would accompany Mr Ferris on shore.

"By-the-by, I was forgetting she was no longer my ship, though I conclude that after the regular forms have been gone through, she will be restored to us at a nominal value," observed Mr Ferris.

"The commander has already made an arrangement with her former master, Captain Massey, on the subject," answered the lieutenant.

From the *Ouzel Galley* Mr Ferris proceeded on board the *Research* to congratulate his friends on their escape, when he invited them all to his house in Kingston, where those who were able to do so at once accompanied him.

Commander Olding and his officers had, of course, to report themselves to the admiral, and to give an account of the loss of the *Champion*. They had to undergo the usual court-martial, and were, as was expected, honourably acquitted.

In the mean time the *Ouzel Galley*, having been restored to her former owners, was quickly fitted for sea, while the *Research* was purchased into the navy, and the command given to Lieutenant Tarwig.

Commander Olding and several of his officers had made up their minds to return home by the first opportunity, but most of the rest, as well as a portion of the *Champion's* crew, joined the *Research*. Of the captured booty, a handsome share was made over to Owen Massey, in consideration of his having been instrumental in securing it.

A fleet of merchantmen being ready to sail, the *Thetis* frigate, on board which Commander Olding had taken a passage, was appointed to convoy them, accompanied by the *Research*. Lieutenant Foley and Gerald very naturally preferred going home in the *Ouzel Galley*, The weather was fine, and there was every prospect of a prosperous voyage.

Much of the time which Ellen might otherwise have spent in comforting her friend Fanny was, as may be supposed, passed in the society of Norman Foley. Norah, also, had less time to bestow on her than might have been the case if Owen Massey had not been on board. To Archie Sandys, therefore, fell the duty of offering such consolation as he was able, to bestow on the young lady. Consequences which might not altogether have

been unexpected ensued. Before the voyage was over Fanny had greatly recovered her spirits, and had consented, when her friend Ellen Ferris married, to become Archie's bride. This was the most important event of the voyage.

On a fine bright morning the *Ouzel Galley* sailed into the Bay of Dublin, with flags flying at her mast-heads and mizen-peak. She was quickly recognised as she ran up the Liffey, and Mr Ferris's partners and the underwriters who had insured her were soon collected on board to welcome her long-lost master and their other friends. A dinner was shortly afterwards given to all who had returned in her, when, to commemorate the event, and to show their satisfaction at the result of the arbitration to which they had agreed, it was determined to form a society, the members of which should be called the captain, officers, and crew of the "Ouzel Galley," the president taking the title of captain, and the other office-bearers that of officers; and it was wisely resolved, instead of going to law, to submit in future any disputes which might arise connected with underwriting to their arbitration. As a mark of respect to Captain Tracy, he was elected the first captain, Owen Massey being appointed his lieutenant.

Before many weeks had elapsed the three proposed marriages took place, Archie Sandys departing with his bride for Scotland, while Norman Foley and Owen Massey made a tour through the south of Ireland before going to Waterford, where they had agreed to remain for some time, to be near Mrs Massey and Captain Tracy. Owen would, however, have again to go to sea, but neither he nor Norah liked to talk of the subject, and wisely forebore thinking about it.

Norman was expecting to enjoy some months on shore, when he and Gerald received orders to join the *Aeolus*, 32-gun frigate, which was at that time cruising off the Irish coast. On getting on board they found several of their old shipmates. They had been at sea for some time when the *Aeolus* was joined by the *Pallas* and *Brilliant* frigates, soon after which a gale coming on compelled the squadron to put into Kinsale harbour. Here they were lying repairing some slight damages they had received, when a courier arrived in hot haste with the information that a French squadron of three frigates, under the command of Captain Thurot, had attacked the town of Carrickfergus and plundered the place, and had had the audacity to demand contributions from Belfast, which he threatened to treat in the same way. Captain Elliott, who commanded the *Aeolus*, and was senior captain, immediately

put to sea with the other frigates in search of the Frenchmen. He soon gained information that they had left Carrickfergus, and were apparently intending to return to France. As far as force was concerned his ships carried the same number of guns as the Frenchmen, but the latter had many more men on board. He, however, felt confident of victory.

The three frigates were standing towards the Isle of Man, when, early in the morning, the French squadron was seen approaching from the northward. Thurot could not possibly escape without an action had he wished it. He commanded the *Marshal Belleisle*, of forty-four guns, and had with him the *Blonde* and *Terpsichore*. Nor was he a man to yield as long as a hope of victory remained: his character was well known to all on board the British ships.

Norman Foley and Gerald had taken part in not a few actions, but they felt that this was likely to prove, though short, as severe as any in which they had fought.

The crews were piped to breakfast as usual. It was quickly got over, and then every man went to his gun and stood ready for the fight. At nine o'clock the first shot was fired, and the *Aeolus*, ranging up alongside the brave Thurot's ship, hotly engaged her. The battle lasted for upwards of an hour, the English firing with a rapidity which told fearfully on their enemies.

The *Blonde* and *Terpsichore* at length struck their colours, but Thurot held out to the last. The *Aeolus*, discharging another broadside, ran her aboard, when grappling-irons were secured and the boarders called away, led by Norman Foley and Gerald Tracy. Her deck already presented the appearance of a perfect shambles, so many of her crew lay dead and dying in all directions. A determined band still held out, headed by an officer who, by his shouts and gestures, encouraged his men to fight till the last. Gerald at first supposed that he must be Thurot, but a second look convinced him that he was a much taller and darker man. Just as the British crew sprang on board a rifle bullet struck him on the chest, and, throwing up his sword-arm, he fell backward on the deck, when the rest of the crew, retreating, shouted out that they yielded. One of the men aft immediately hauled down the French flag.

Among the slain was Thurot, who had been struck down just before the ship got alongside.

Gerald then approached the officer he had seen killed. A glance convinced him that he was no other than O'Harrall. This was



confirmed by Tim Maloney, who had joined the *Aeolus* with him, and corroborated by some of the French prisoners, who stated that he had only a short time before come on board the ship, having lately arrived from the West Indies.

"This will not be unsatisfactory news to Owen Massey," observed Gerald to Norman Foley. "It is my belief that he is the last of the O'Harralls, and Owen will have a good chance of recovering the property of which they so unjustly deprived his family."

The prizes were towed into Ramsay Bay, in the Isle of Man, for the brave Thurot's ship had not struck until her hold was half full of water, and she was in an almost sinking state.

The French commodore was buried with the honours due to a gallant foe, and many who had formerly known him mourned his fate.

The *Aeolus* being paid off, Lieutenant Foley obtained his commander's rank. When the war was over his young wife would not allow him again to go to sea.

Gerald stuck to the service and became an admiral.

Owen Massey, having regained his paternal property, remained on shore, although he joined the representative crew of "The Ouzel Galley," of which for many years he held the honourable post of captain.

**The End.**

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